



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2021

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc CIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/3276873

Site of Orchard House, 48 Well Road, Otford TN14 5PT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Patrick against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00866/HOUSE, dated 19 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is for the installation of three (3) new roof-lights to the front and south-west side elevations and on the flat roof, amendments to the dormer to the rear elevation, new chimney to the south-east elevation, alteration to lean-to roof to south-west boundary.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I note the appellants dissatisfaction regarding the planning application process, including consideration of the proposal by the Council's Planning Committee. However, this is a matter for the main parties and not for my deliberation as part of this case.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in an established residential area that is typified by brick and tile dwellings including some with tall, white-rendered chimney stacks. No 48 Well Road is a two-storey dwelling set on a garden plot that is similar to the other dwellings on this side of Well Road. The host property faces onto the bungalow style dwellings on the other side of the road, some of which have rooflights to the front. To the rear of the host dwelling there is a tree and hedge-lined garden that slopes down to a rear boundary and the wooded land beyond. The properties to either side of the rear of No 48 are characterised by simple roof lines and a small number of modest rear extensions some of which can be seen from the garden of No 48 as Well Road curves towards Bubblestone Road.

5. The Council has previously approved an application¹ for the construction of a dwelling on the appeal site. Indeed, I noticed at my site visit that most elements of the proposed development appear to have been completed. In addition a number of other elements, which are beyond the scope of the approval, have also been constructed as part of the new dwelling. Subsequently, the proposal before me is for three new roof lights to the front and side elevations and a new chimney to the south-east elevation of the dwelling. Alterations to a flat roof 'lean-to' on the south-west boundary and a revised rear dormer that would include grey powder-coated windows and posts.
6. The appellants have brought to my attention that there have been other roof extensions constructed in the nearby area². However, I have limited details of those schemes before me, some of which are in different locations altogether. Therefore, as is correct, I have assessed the proposal on its own planning merits.
7. As such, while I find that the chimney stacks and the rooflights would accord with the surrounding area, and notwithstanding that the dormer would only be visible to the rear of the dwelling, the fact remains that the rear dormer would be of some bulk that would be highly visible from the gardens of the surrounding properties as a consequence of the road layout. I acknowledge that the proposed dormer would be of a similar volume to the approved dormer and would be set below the ridge line. Nevertheless, the proposed dormer would be higher than the approved scheme with an extensive range of vertical fenestration. Consequently, the proposal would be at odds with the surrounding dwellings which have more modest rear elevations, fenestration and extensions that have been constructed in traditional type materials and designs.
8. Moreover, while the appellants contend that the proposal would blend with the materials of the ground floor bi-fold doors, I find to the contrary. Whether the structural requirements have influenced the design or not, in my view the grey powder-coated aluminium finishes at first floor level would accentuate the size of the dormer by means of a highly prominent canopy and post type arrangement. Furthermore, the overall scale of the proposal would be disproportionate to the roofscape of the host property, particularly when considered against the simple roofscapes of the neighbouring dwellings. Therefore, I conclude that, when considered as a whole, the scale, mass and bulk of the proposal would be incongruous with the character and appearance of the area.
9. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies SP1 of the Sevenoaks District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011, and Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan, Allocations and Development Management Plan, 2015, which say, amongst other things, that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive character of the area.
10. For similar reasons, the proposal does not meet the aims of Paragraph 130 (c) of the *National Planning Policy Framework* which requires that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

¹ 14/02917/FUL

² 21/00328/LDCPR, 21/00095/LDCPR, 21/00039/HOUSE, 20/03547/HOUSE, 20/03129/HOUSE, & 14/03371/HOUSE

Other Matters

11. I note previous schemes³ forwarded by the appellants in an attempt to make the scheme acceptable to the Council, and that they consider removal of the steel structures would be wasteful. Nonetheless, this does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance to the area I have found above.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR

³ 18/00517/HOUSE and 19/00149/HOUSE