The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2021

by N Praine BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 JANUARY 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/21/3277332
44 Wellfield, Hartley DA3 7EQ

- 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 Russell Coombs against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
- The application Ref 21/00344/HOUSE, dated 3 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2021.
- The development proposed is for part single, part two storey, rear and side extensions.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Dwellings in Wellfield are varied in their design, plot sizes, and spacing to boundaries. Some dwellings have also been extended to the side at two storey height. However, the prevailing character of the immediate area and context of the appeal site, is one which enjoys spacing between the built form and flank boundaries. The appeal property, a gable ended two storey dwellinghouse, forms one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings and is separated from the boundary. This separation makes a positive contribution to the spacious character of the locality.

4. The development proposal, at first floor and roof level, would close the gap to the boundary and this by reason of its height and width would be visually prominent when viewed from Wellfield. This loss of spacing would be harmful to the character of the area and this harm is further exacerbated by the proposed 'barn end' roof which is at odds with the design and appearance of the host property.

5. While my attention was drawn to other examples of side extensions to the boundary in the locality, most are separated from the boundary. Of the few that are not, the overall prevailing character in those cases is more spacious. These few examples are visually discordant with the existing spacious character of Wellfield and the existence of harm does not justify further discordant development. Consequently, this does not outweigh the harm I have identified above.

6. The appeal property is set forward of 46 Wellfield. However, there is still some alignment between the properties and the development proposal would be seen in the context of these two properties. Consequently, the staggered arrangement of the houses would not mitigate the harm identified.

7. While the extensions to the rear are larger and deeper, these elements of the scheme will have limited impact upon the character or appearance of the surrounding area given the separation and screening from public viewpoints. However, the acceptability of these rear sections of the development proposal does not outweigh the harm set out above.

8. The appellant has referred to numerous paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework in the appeal documentation. While I have considered these paragraphs, they do not alter my findings.

9. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. Accordingly, I find conflict with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan Development Plan Document 2015, Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011) and the Sevenoaks Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2009, all of which seek to ensure high quality design which does not harm the character or appearance of the area.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has addressed the effect of the proposed development on light to No 46. However, the Council has not refused the application for this reason. Accordingly, I have not dealt with this matter in any detail in this decision. Furthermore, given my overall findings, I have not addressed concerns raised in respect of noise, wildlife, drainage, and privacy.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, having regard to the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework and all other relevant considerations, the appeal is dismissed.

N Praine

INSPECTOR