
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2022

by Robert Naylor BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/21/3287369

Primrose Cottage, Clenches Farm Road, Sevenoaks TN13 2LU

- 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 and Mrs N Thomas against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02026/HOUSE, dated 22 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "2 storey extension and alteration of replacement outbuilding".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Kippington and Oakhill Road Conservation Area (KCA). Given its conservation area location, I am conscious of my statutory duty arising from section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached property located in the KCA which has a semi-rural feel, given the low density properties and the verdant landscaping. The two properties known as "Croxley" and "Primrose Cottage" are situated at the corner of Clenches Farm Road and Oak Lane. The stretch of Oak Lane running northeast from Primrose Cottage is characterised by houses sitting in large roadside plots with leafy boundary treatments which limit visibility into most of the properties.
4. The appeal property is set back from both Clenches Farm Road and Oak Lane and orientated on an angle to both. This coupled with the significant boundary vegetation consisting of mature and well-established tree, bush and shrub species, provide only oblique views of the appeal site from public vantage points. I am told, and it is not disputed that "Croxley" and "Primrose Cottage" have been locally listed and are a good example of an historic architectural style, particularly one associated with Kent. Consequently, the appeal site, and surrounding properties form a group of modest buildings with an enclosed feel that contributes positively to the significance of the KCA.
5. I have noted the appeal property has an existing single storey rear extension, which I find proportionate to the main dwelling. The proposal would provide an

increased two-storey extension to the rear, which would also alter the roof form of the host property. Whilst the proposed roof height would be equivalent to the existing roof, the proposal would substantially elongate the hipped roof on the side profile, creating a crown roof form. In doing so, the proportions of the locally distinct pitched roof would be detrimentally altered, and there would be a significant visual change in the mass of the property at roof level. The resultant incongruous, side crown roof form, would diminish the modest roofscape of the host property and that of the adjoining property at "Croxley".

6. The extension at the rear of the property, would also be harmful, providing further bulk and mass at the ground and first floor levels, in addition to the changes of the roof form. The proposal would appear out of proportion and too large in relation to the host dwelling and the surroundings. As a result, the proposed extension would cause harm to the character and significance of the conservation area, and would not be compatible with local character, building proportions and form.
7. I noted during the site visit, that given its corner location the increased scale and associated solid mass would be noticeable from only glimpse views. Nevertheless, whilst views from Clenches Farm Road and Oak Lane would be limited, this does not preclude the need to achieve good design. Accordingly, the unsympathetic extension would have a negative impact on the appearance of the host property and the surrounding area where the modest properties make a positive contribution to the significance of the KCA.
8. I note the appellant contends the proposal would complement the host property and its neighbour, and is not overpowering given its subservient nature, and use of appropriate materials. However, in my view the scale, roof form and mass of the proposal fails to respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. The use of matching materials would not minimise the harmful alteration to this significant feature. As such, the scale and height of the appeal site is not proportionate or harmonious in appearance and would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and the KCA.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property, a locally listed building, and the KCA. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy SP1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan adopted February 2011 and Policies EN1 and EN4 of the Local Plan Allocations and Development Management Plan adopted February 2015 which, amongst other things, require all development to be of high quality design; respect the topography and character and conserve or enhance, the significance, character and setting of non-designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

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

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR