



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: 12th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/22/3293448

3 Oakdene Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3HH

- 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 Mrs Burden against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03380/HOUSE, dated 7 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as “first floor extension”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Oakdene Road is made up of semi-detached and detached properties. Many properties have been altered and extended overtime, with a number of bungalow properties providing roof extensions, thus enabling two storey accommodation and appearing more akin to chalet bungalows. Within the area, I also noted purpose built two storey detached properties, adding to the ad hoc appearance. Despite this variation, there is a rhythm to Oakdene Road, with houses incorporating gabled front roofs. Generally, relatively low building heights, set back from the road provide an unenclosed appearance.
4. The semi-detached chalet style bungalow on the appeal site is at the northern end of Oakdene Road, close to the junction with Bradbourne Vale Road. The property is set-back from the road and sits within a small cluster of similar bungalows which all exhibit gables, and front and rear flat roof dormer extensions, akin to the appeal site. This cluster occupies a prominent and important position, at the entrance to the road, which coupled with the local topography, emphasises the overall low building level and low-density character of the area.
5. The proposed first floor side extension would be extremely visible, and significantly higher than the original ridge height of the host property, and as a result would over-dominate the roofline. The additional height and scale of development would result in a disjointed appearance to the detriment of the host property and the adjoining cluster. I have noted that the ridge height over the main roof is maintained and would still align with the adjoining property at No. 5 Oakdene Road, retaining their relationship. Nevertheless, the

aforementioned first floor extension would be set above this, appearing visually dominant and unbalancing the pair.

6. The narrow width of the gable coupled with the protrusion above the main roofline would provide a disproportionate vertical feature, accentuating the overall height to the first floor side extension. This again would highlight the unbalanced nature to the front of the semi-detached pair. I have noted the appellant asserts that the form and appearance would be appropriate, responding positively to the distinctiveness of the road, however in my view, the scale and height of the proposal would be inappropriately excessive. It would thus appear awkward and would unbalance the appearance and form of the property as a whole, and would noticeably stray from the architectural form of the cluster of the bungalows that adjoin the site.
7. I have also noted the reference to other properties in Oakdene Road, that gained permission for an increase in ridge height, notably at Nos. 4 and 34. It is clear that the Council gave weight to retaining the existing form of the property when considering upward extensions and concluded that they would not harm the character and appearance of the area. However, the circumstances here are different. No. 4 is very different being detached, and thus is more proportionate to the size of the host property given this. No. 34 is similar, also being semi-detached, but the extension provides a more horizontal emphasis, which appears more proportionate to the existing building in that case. Furthermore, these examples do not provide an overriding influence over the style of dwellings, and I have considered this proposal on its merits in the context of the site.
8. In relation to the main issue, the proposal would be contrary to Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted February 2011 which requires new development to respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. The proposal would also be contrary to Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan adopted February 2015 the advice of the Sevenoaks Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document which, amongst other things, require the layout of the proposed development to respond to the scale, height and site coverage as well as respecting the topography and character of the site and surrounding area.

Other Matters

9. I agree that the proposal would not adversely affect living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and parking provision would be adequate. However, these matters do not outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

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

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR