



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 December 2022

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/22/3294442

7 Manor Road, Cobham, Gravesend DA13 9BW

- 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 Ms Sara Gray against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20211520, dated 21 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the part demolition of the existing dwelling including removal of existing roof and erection of new first floor and roof along with new boundary wall/fence and landscaping and swimming pool.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a detached chalet bungalow on Manor Road with off-street parking to the front. It is located within a row of other properties of differing scale and architectural style. The immediate vicinity is predominantly residential in nature.
4. The proposal broadly involves the enlargement of the first floor accommodation; raising the ridge line with extensions to the front, rear and side such that the built form would span a larger proportion of the width of the plot at first floor level. The design would include two large projecting gable elements to the front and rear.
5. The re-modelled house would be clearly visible from the public domain and the surrounding curtilages of other properties in the vicinity. In my view, the extent of development would not be sympathetic to the relatively modest scale of the existing chalet bungalow and those properties to either side. The cumulative impact of the mass and bulk at first floor level, together with the substantial gable features, would appear dominant and obtrusive within the context of the local streetscene.

6. I appreciate that the locality comprises houses of varying size and design, including other chalets and two-storey residences. However, overall these units are more diminutive than that proposed, and therefore I do not consider that they are comparable to the scheme before me. In any event, the appearance of other dwellings would be a neutral consideration in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
7. In general, front boundary treatments along Manor Road are sylvan, comprising mature hedgerows and trees. There is a more contemporary fence to the fore of a dwelling in the direction of Sole Street Station, however this allows for views through to the front garden.
8. In contrast, the new front boundary wall and gate would be of a more solid appearance, spanning the entire width of the plot, and resulting in the removal of much of the existing vegetation. To my mind, they would introduce harsh and urbanising features to the street scene, which would appear incongruous within the context of the vicinity. This detrimental effect would not be assuaged through the retention of the fir trees in the front garden of the appeal site.
9. I acknowledge those other matters that have been advanced in support of the development; there would be no adverse harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of surrounding properties, there have been no objections from local residents and there would be improvements in safety and security. However, none of these points could justify the harm I have identified above.
10. I am cognisant that an amended scheme has been permitted by the Council since the appeal was submitted. This notwithstanding, the approved plans show a building of reduced bulk and mass that would be more sympathetic to the scale of the existing house, and as such I consider that it would not justify the appeal proposals before me.
11. I conclude that the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area. It would be in conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, which seeks to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

12. Based on the above and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR