



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27TH February 2023

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H2265/D/23/3315221

2 The Drive, Tonbridge, TN9 2LP

- 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 Libo Tang against the decision of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.
 - The application Ref TM/22/02205/FL, dated 11 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed mansard loft extension with dormer windows, floor plan redesign and all associated works at Ryecroft, 2, The Drive
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene and the area.

Reasons

3. The southern part of The Drive and the area around the junction of The Drive and Pembury Road is primarily characterised by imposing Edwardian detached and semi-detached two and two and half storey houses. They are constructed from red brick with steeply pitched slate and plain tiled roofs, with ornate chimneys on either side of the roofs. On their front elevations the dwellings have prominent two storey projecting bay windows and dormers with gable roofs. The dwellings sit behind modest sized front gardens and follow the topography of the road, which rises to the south.
4. The appeal property is located at the northern end of Priory Road, where it sits at a lower level and is set back from the front building line of the Edwardian house at 4 Priory Road by in excess of eight metres. In the front garden there is a large detached garage with a flat roof which partially screens the front elevation of the appeal dwelling from the street scene. As a result of these factors the appeal dwelling is visually discrete within the street scene.
5. The appeal dwelling comprises a modern detached two story dwelling with flat elevations under a pitched roof with front and rear gables. It is of no particular architectural merit and other than the front facing gable, its design neither reflects or blends in with the surrounding Edwardian dwellings.

6. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) promotes a positive and creative approach to new development; higher densities where appropriate and of making effective use of land to meet housing and other needs. Together paragraphs 126, 130 and 134 of the Framework seek the creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and require new development to be designed to a high standard. It should be sympathetic to local character and history and safeguard the environment, whilst not preventing appropriate change. Development that is not well designed should be refused.
7. Consistent with this policy CP24 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy 2007 (CS) and Saved Policy P4/12 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998 (LP), require new development to be well designed and to respect the site and its surroundings. Development that would be detrimental to the built environment will not be permitted. Residential extensions should not have an adverse impact on the character of the building or the street scene. The supporting text to LP Policy P4/12 advises that extensions can have a significant visual impact in terms of the design and proportions of the building and the way it is seen in the street scene.
8. The appeal site is within an established residential area where many of the dwellings have second floor accommodation and roof conversions. Accordingly, in principle it is an area where roof extensions can be acceptable, provided they respect the host property and the resultant dwelling blends in appropriately with the street scene.
9. The proposed mansard roof would be the same height as the existing roof. It would have very steeply pitched side roof slopes with three shallow pitched roof dormers stretching across almost the full width of the side roof slopes. The front and rear elevations would have truncated gables, with one large horizontal window within the front gable and two within the rear gable.
10. Not only is the pitch of the mansard roof uncharacteristic of the locality, the dormers would appear top heavy and cluttered above the existing side walls of the host dwelling. The proposed large truncated gables on the front and rear elevations would be out of scale with the proportions of the host dwelling and other dwellings within the street scene. They would also appear stark due to the resultant large areas of brickwork above the first floor windows. The proposed windows in the gables would emphasise the uncharacteristic width and truncated design of the front and rear gables. These windows would also fail to respect the proportions and appearance of the existing fenestration.
11. As a result of these factors the proposed roof extension would dominate and unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. It would also be clearly visible from The Drive and between the adjacent dwellings in Pembury Road, where it would be totally out of keeping with the rich character and appearance of the street scene and the area.
12. This harm would outweigh the benefits of the proposal for the appellant and their family that would result from the additional accommodation. In view of the nature of the concerns raised it is not a matter that could be satisfactorily addressed by the imposition of conditions.
13. Finally, the appellant has referred to a number of roof extensions within The Drive and elsewhere, although from the limited details provided none of the examples appear to be directly comparable to the appeal proposal. Rather

than set a precedent, they serve to highlight the need to assess each proposal on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies and advice.

14. I conclude on the main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene and the area. Accordingly, it would conflict with CS Policy CP24 and LP Policy P4/12.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR