



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2023

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07.11.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/23/3323652

9 Childsbridge Way, Seal, Sevenoaks, TN15 0DG

- 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 & Mrs J Charamsa against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00959/HOUSE, dated 31 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as 2 storey side extension, first floor rear extension, loft conversion into habitable space, side and rear facing dormers with roof lights and alterations to fenestration. Revised pitched roof. New Porch.
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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 property.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within an outer suburban area to the north of Seal's historic Kentish village core. Childsbridge Way includes a mixture of chalet and two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings from a broad range of designs. This includes a variety of roof forms, including front, side and rear facing dormers and roof extensions. The dwellings are constructed from a variety of materials, including brick, tile hanging, white painted render, timber detailing, plain tiles and slate. The dwellings are located behind shallow front gardens, and although their front building lines vary, the dwellings form a tight and continuous row within the street scene.
4. The appeal property comprises an extended two storey detached family house constructed from a mixture of light coloured brick, tile hanging and render, under a fragmented, plain tiled and fully hipped roof. Planning permission has been granted to materially change the size and appearance of the dwelling. With the approved scheme the width of the house would be increased resulting in a simple oblong shaped building, with a taller, deeper and more steeply pitched roof with gable ends to the front and rear. A third floor would be included in the roof-space, which would be served by a series of roof lights and a large full height side dormer with a crown roof. The front cheek of the dormer would be very similar in height and form to the existing dormer in the

adjacent side roof-slope of the dwelling at 10 Childsbridge Way (No.10). With the approved extension the eaves and ridge heights of the resultant dwelling would match those of No.10. The approved eaves height would match that of 8 Childsbridge Way (No.8), although the approved ridge height would be materially higher than that of No.8.

5. Together and amongst other things policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015 (DMP) and policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 (CS), require new development to be of a high standard of design and to respect the character of the site and its surroundings. The Sevenoaks District Council Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises that the scale, proportion and height of an extension should respect the character of the existing building unless there is strong justification for an alternative approach. Extensions should fit unobtrusively with the host building and its setting. The Seal Village Design Statement seeks to maintain existing high standards throughout the settlement.
6. In relation to the appeal proposal the above policies and the objectives of the advice in the SPD are consistent with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework).
7. With the proposal, other than the rear section of the roof, the appeal dwelling would be extended to form a traditionally designed, rectangular dwelling with uncluttered elevations. Whilst it would be very different to the existing building, it would be sensitively proportioned and would sit comfortably on the site and within the street scene. The front section of the proposed new roof would be traditionally designed with a steep pitches with gable ends.
8. Conversely, the flat roofed roof extension to the rear of the traditional pitched roof at the front would have a low pitched skirt with materially taller vertical painted rendered walls above it. These walls would be set in slightly from the outer walls of the dwelling. At ridge height the flat roof would have prominent cornice detailing and on one side of the flat roofed extension would be a tall flat roofed dormer window. This clash of styles would appear contrived and incongruous. When viewed from the street scene the two roof types would be clearly visible between the dwellings and above the dwelling at No.8. The rear roof section would be totally out of keeping with the front section of the roof, with the smooth rendered section above the slate tiled skirt adding to its perceived height and prominence.
9. From the rear garden environment the clash between the two roof forms would be less evident, although due to its proportions and design detailing the flat roof would appear top heavy alongside the pitched roofs of No.8 and No.10.
10. For these reasons the proposed roof extension would appear poorly proportioned and incongruous. It would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. This harm would outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family that would result from the additional accommodation and is not a matter that could be satisfactorily dealt with by conditions.
11. I note that the dwelling at 16 Childsbridge Way has a flat crown roof. However, it is modest in height and form and its sides are fully pitched and slate tiled. It is visually discrete and its slate sides both sit between the slate

clad roofs of the adjacent dwellings and reflect the existing steeply pitched tile hung sides of the existing appeal dwelling and the dwelling at No.8. I also noted during the appeal site visit that the dwelling at No.8 has a small crown roof, although it is barely noticeable and does not impact on the character and appearance of that dwelling or the street scene. Rather than set a precedent these flats roofs highlight the need to assess each proposal on its planning merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.

12. Finally, I have taken into consideration the appellant's fallback position. With the approved scheme, the side facing dormer window would be bulky and would balance the main roof of the dwelling. However, it is located towards the rear of the house where it is largely screened from the street scene and it responds positively, creating a sense of uniformity with the existing side dormer at No.10. As a consequence, I find that the approved scheme would blend in more readily with the existing street scene.
13. I conclude on the main issue that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Accordingly, it would conflict with DMP Policy EN1, CS Policy SP1 and the advice set out in the SPD.

Other matters

14. The proposed roof extension would be taller than the dwelling at No.8 and would project further in to the rear garden environment at first floor level. It would also project forward of the dwellings at No.8 and No.10. However, the proposed resultant dwelling would be located to the north of No.8 and would be separated from No.10 by the attached garage and a tall ground floor side and rear extension at No.10. For these reasons I find that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of daylight, sunlight, or have a visually overbearing impact on the outlook from No.8 and No.10.
15. As suggested by the council, any overlooking from the proposed side dormer window could be addressed by the use of obscure glass and restricted opening. Similarly any overlooking of the garden area immediately to the rear of the dwelling at No.8 could be minimised to an acceptable level through the use of a tall privacy screen along the side edge of the adjacent glazed balcony area. These are both matters that could be dealt with by condition.

Conclusion

16. Whilst I have found in favour of the appellant on some matters the conclusion on the main issue represents a compelling reason for dismissing this appeal.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR