



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/U2235/D/23/3325852

Stone Lodge, Queens Road, Maidstone, ME16 0JD

- 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 Tracy Bilewicz against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/501033/FULL, dated 27 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 27 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed loft conversion with dormer windows to both side elevations.
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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 and the adjacent street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling occupies a prominent position opposite to the junction of Queens Road and Langdale Drive. It is located at the end of a row of uniformly designed chalet style dwellings with steeply pitched roofs and tile hung gables facing the street scene and rear gardens. Some of these dwellings, including the appeal dwelling, have modest sized flat roofed dormers set back within their side roof slopes. The dwellings are arranged with crossovers between alternate pairs of dwellings, with flat roofed garages sited to the rear of the driveways. Both the roof designs and the wide driveways contribute to the spacious setting of the dwellings.
4. Immediately to the southeast of the appeal dwelling is a row of uniformly designed asymmetrical dwellings, although they have similarly designed front gables, which are their dominant feature. These dwellings have two storey projections that project close to their side boundaries and which are set back from their front gables. As a result, the front gables and associated steeply pitched roofs remain their dominant feature within the street scene. Due to its siting, the appeal property relates appropriately to both rows of dwellings.
5. Together and amongst other things Policies DM1 and DM9 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017 (LP), seek to ensure that new development is designed to a high standard and creates a high-quality public realm. New development should respond positively to local context and the established

- character of the area. The character, scale, height, form and appearance of residential extensions should fit unobtrusively with the host dwelling and the character of the street scene.
6. The Maidstone Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), advises that loft extensions should not detract from the characteristic roof profile of a street. The subordinated form of an extension is particularly important where the rhythm of buildings in a street scene follow a regular pattern or are regularly spaced. It is also desirable that the form, proportions, symmetry and detail of extensions respects the original building. Where visible from the public realm roof shape is critical to creating a successful built form.
 7. Amongst other things paragraphs 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) state that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. New development should add to the overall quality of the area and the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
 8. The steeply pitched side roof slopes and front gables are a prominent and consistent feature of the host and adjacent dwellings on both sides of the appeal property. They create a sense of rhythm and uniformity within the street scene and form one of a number of uniformly designed and sited groups of dwellings within Queens Road.
 9. The proposed roof extensions would project almost the entire depth of the dwelling and their uncharacteristic shallow pitched roofs would project close to the ridge line of the host dwelling. They would cover most of the side roof slopes and their deep tile hung cheeks would project to the outer ground floor walls of the dwelling.
 10. Although the resultant form of the dwelling would be symmetrical, due to their combined height, projection and proximity to the front of the existing dwelling, the extensions would appear top heavy, bulky and would overwhelm the roof of the host dwelling. In particular, their shallow pitched roofs and gabled cheeks would look totally out of keeping with the steeply pitched roof slopes and associated gable.
 11. For these reasons the proposed extension would undermine and unacceptably detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the immediate street scene. I have given careful consideration to the personal circumstances of the appellant and their family. However, in this instance I find that the level of harm that would be caused by the proposal would materially outweigh the benefits for the appellant and their family. Further, this is not a matter that could be satisfactorily addressed through the imposition of conditions.
 12. I conclude that the proposed roof extensions would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene. The proposal would therefore conflict with LP Policies DM1 & DM9, the SPD and paragraphs 126 and 130 of the Framework.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR