



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2024

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/D/23/3328771
72 Brattle Wood, Sevenoaks TN13 1QU

- 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 and Mrs K Parfitt against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03572/HOUSE, dated 16 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "Demolition of existing rear wall and removal of chimney. Demolition of 1.5 storey structure with dormers. Two storey side and front extension with alterations to roofline. New covered porch with steps. Ground floor rear extension with rooflights. New garage. Extension to existing driveway. Extension to existing vehicular access. Landscaping. Alterations to fenestration and external materials".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the streetscene and the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns a two storey detached dwelling in a street that is characterised by such properties. The site is located within the White Hart Area as defined in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment (RCAA), Adopted April 2012. This indicates that a relatively regular building line is a positive feature of this area. I saw at my site visit that this is a noticeable characteristic in Brattle Wood within the vicinity of the appeal site.
4. However, the proposed development includes a front addition to provide a garage that would project towards the street, extending appreciably beyond the established building line. The depth would be significant and not much less than that of the main two storey body of the dwelling. It would extend across part of the front elevation from the side of the new porch to beyond the south facing flank. The roof would rise just above the cill level of first floor windows.
5. In these circumstances, rather than being a subservient or modestly sized extension, because of aspects such as the depth, height, scale and mass it

would appear overly dominant and disproportionately large, overwhelming the front elevation. Moreover, it would also unacceptably disrupt the established building line, appearing visually intrusive in the street. These detrimental effects would occur despite the slopes of the roof around the outside of the front extension matching the angle of those on the main roof.

6. There is existing planting to the front of the site, a new two metre high hedge is shown on the plans and a condition concerning new planting could be imposed. However, even with additional landscaping and the existing vegetation, the garage would still be clearly seen through the widened access into the property. Furthermore, planting could die or be removed by future occupiers and it is likely that the garage would be an appreciably longer lasting feature of the locality. I saw during my site visit that there is some variation in ground levels in the vicinity and that the adjacent dwelling at no. 74 is at a higher level. However, neither of the above considerations would significantly mitigate the adverse effects I have found, which would still be readily apparent from the street.
7. The Appellant has referred to planning permissions granted by the Council for a garage at 82 Brattle Wood and development at 49 Brattle Wood that includes a garage projecting toward the street. However, the latter is on a corner plot at the junction with White Hart Wood and no. 82 is at the end of the line of properties towards Beechmont Road. Neither of these properties therefore have dwellings immediately adjacent to both sides, unlike in this instance. Consequently, the visual impact on the building line in this case would be considerably different. I saw at my site visit that the garage at no. 82 has a fairly low entirely flat roof unlike the current garage proposal which would be noticeably taller. Moreover, these are also fairly unusual and isolated instances that should not be used as a precedent for additional development.
8. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the development would harm the streetscene and the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality.
9. There would be conflict with Core Strategy 2011, Policy SP 1 and Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015, Policy EN1 and Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan Policy C4. Taken together and among other things, these intend that proposals should create a high quality of design responding to the layout, site coverage and distinctive local character of the area, as well as taking account of the RCAA.
10. There would be conflict with the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, Residential Extensions 2009, where it is indicated that extensions should normally respect existing building lines and not be of a size or proportion that harms the integrity of the design of the original dwelling. It is also advised that garages in front of the building line will not normally be allowed. The front extension would also be contrary to the guidance in the RCAA that development should respect the relatively regular building line.
11. In the National Planning Policy Framework it is indicated that decisions should ensure that developments satisfy a number of considerations. These include that the proposed development should add to the overall quality of the area, as well as being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, which would not be achieved in this case.

12. It is pointed out that the appeal site is not near any Listed Buildings or within a Conservation Area and the Town Council recommended approval. It is also explained that the scheme was revised during the Council's consideration of the application, with the size of the front addition being reduced. Nevertheless, these matters do not confer acceptability on the appeal, which must be considered on its own merits.
13. The Appellant has submitted a bat survey with the appeal in response to the Council's second reason for refusal. However, regardless of this and even if this matter could be satisfactorily addressed by the imposition of conditions, this would not justify accepting the development given the adverse effects that I have found in relation to the streetscene and character and appearance. Despite the acceptability of the other parts of the overall development to which the Council has raised no objections and taking account of all other matters raised, it is determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR