

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 September 2024

by David Smith BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/W/24/3337493

Ocean Swell, 33 Sea Road, Westgate-on-Sea, CT8 8SB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ocean Swell against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application Ref is F/TH/23/1480.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposed extension would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Westgate-on-Sea Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Ocean Swell is a three-storey property used as a residential care home. Originally a modest villa it has been altered unsympathetically over the years, including a single storey front extension. Westgate-on-Sea Conservation Area is extensive. Its main significance derives from the general quality of its buildings which largely reflect its origins and development as a Victorian seaside resort.
4. The proposal would follow the design of the existing front projection and would provide a covered entrance for the existing ramp and an enlarged office. However, a combination of its flat roof, width and depth would result in a boxy, jarring feature in a prominent position readily visible from Sea Road and the gardens opposite. Furthermore, it would result in an 'ad hoc', protruding element to the main building that would jut out in an incongruous manner. As such, whether the windows are aluminium or UPVC, it would noticeably detract from the architectural attributes of the conservation area.
5. Therefore, the proposed extension would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Accordingly, it would not adhere to the principles for such development set out in Policy HE02 of the Thanet Local Plan. Furthermore, there would be conflict with Local Plan

Policy SP36 which seeks to protect the historic environment from inappropriate development. The high quality of design expected by Local Plan Policy QD02 would also not be achieved.

Other Considerations

6. The proposal would provide greater circulation space around the entrance and cover in bad weather and a larger office area to accommodate residents and their families for private consultations. It would therefore assist in the day-to-day operation of the home and increase levels of comfort for those entering the building.
7. However, it is unclear whether alternatives might exist for the creation of a suitable meeting room and there is already a canopy above the ramp. In any event, these aspects of the proposed extension would bring about little in the way of public benefits. They would not outweigh what the National Planning Policy Framework refers to as the less than substantial harm that would be caused to the significance of this designated heritage asset.
8. The extension would encroach onto the front forecourt which could be used for vehicle parking or for service and delivery vehicles. However, there would remain scope for the area to be used in this way and there is unrestricted on-street parking available on both sides of Sea Road. This concern of the Council therefore does not count against the proposal.

Conclusion

9. The proposed extension would not accord with the development plan and would harm the significance of the conservation area. There are no other considerations which outweigh these findings. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

David Smith

INSPECTOR