

4.4 – SE/15/02261/HOUSE Date expired 21 September 2015

PROPOSAL: Removal of existing conservatory and demolition of existing porch and the erection of an infill extension and first and attic floors to the existing bungalow.

LOCATION: 32 Bullfinch Lane, Riverhead TN13 2EB

WARD(S): Dunton Green & Riverhead

ITEM FOR DECISION

This application has been referred to Development Control Committee by Councillor Bayley who considered the application to be suitable in design terms, in conjunction with policy EN1 of the ADMP.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be REFUSED for the following reason(s):

The proposal would harm the appearance and character of the Residential Character Area and streetscene because of uncharacteristic design and height of the roof. This conflicts with policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Note to Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals. SDC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner, by;

- Offering a duty officer service to provide initial planning advice,
- Providing a pre-application advice service,
- When appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any small scale issues that may arise in the processing of their application,
- Where possible and appropriate suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome,
- Allowing applicants to keep up to date with their application and viewing all consultees comments on line (www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/environment/planning/planning_services_online/654.asp),
- By providing a regular forum for planning agents,
- Working in line with the NPPF to encourage developments that improve the improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area,
- Providing easy on line access to planning policies and guidance, and
- Encouraging them to seek professional advice whenever appropriate.

In this instance the applicant/agent:

- 1) Working in line with the NPPF, the application was refused as the proposal failed to improve the economic, social or environmental conditions of the area.

Description of Proposal

- 1 It is proposed that the existing bungalow on the site be significantly extended to create a two storey property. The principle works are:
 - Demolition of an existing side extension between the existing bungalow and site boundary.
 - The creation of a rectangular building footprint, through infill development at the rear elevation and demolition of a porch area at the front elevation.
 - Installation of a first floor of the exact same dimensions at the ground floor.
 - Installation of a new gabled roof.
 - Installation of a new chimney stack at the western elevation.
 - New open porch to front.
 - Large number of works to fenestration including
 - Installation of three windows at ground floor western elevation
 - Installation of one window at eastern elevation and removal of two existing windows at this elevation
 - Installation of two sets of bi-folding doors at rear elevation, essentially filling the entire rear ground floor elevation
 - Two windows at first floor west elevation
 - Two windows at first floor front elevation
 - Window at first floor side elevation
 - Window and Juliet balcony at rear first floor elevation
 - Two windows at rear elevation loft space
 - One window at front elevation loft space.
 - Six rooflights in the roof, providing light to loft element.
 - Materials include;
 - Brick at first floor elevation, rendered white;
 - Hung orange tile at first floor level, and loft level at front and rear elevation,
 - Tiled roof.

Description of Site

- 2 The site is located on a residential lane in the Riverhead area of Sevenoaks urban area. The site is part of a long row of houses along the lane, and forms a part of a clear street lineage. The applicant property itself is one of just a few bungalows on the lane.
- 3 The site stands higher than the road due to local topography, and is set back from the road by a private front garden and driveway. To the rear of the property is a long narrow back garden.
- 4 Either side of the bungalow on this site are two storey houses, as are the properties opposite.

Constraints

- 5 Sevenoaks Residential Character Assessment – B06 Bullfinch Lane.
- 6 Nearby TPO Ref. 01/008/TPO
- 7 Area of Archaeological Potential

Policies

ADMP:

- 8 Policies – EN1, EN2

Sevenoaks Core Strategy:

- 9 Policies – SP1

Other:

- 10 NPPF

Planning History

- 11 13/02346/FUL – Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement dwelling.

Consultations

Parish / Town Council

- 12 Parish Council - Support

Other Consultees

- 13 None

Representations

- 14 Neighbour – Concern over reduction of light into neighbouring property; height of building

Chief Planning Officer's Appraisal

Principal Issues

- 15 The proposed development will be assessed in relation to the policies that are relevant, outlined in the Policies section above, an overview of the policies and their contents is given below.
- 16 The NPPF identifies a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking. One of these core principles is to 'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings' (Para 17).

- 17 The NPPF also states that ‘The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people’ (Para. 56).

Impact on character and appearance of the area

- 18 Policy SP1 – Design of New Development and Conservation of the Core Strategy states that ‘All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated’ (pp.60).
- 19 Policy EN1 – Design Principles of the ADMP states that the form of the proposed development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area. It continues that the layout of the development should respect the topography and character of the site and surrounding area.
- 20 The Residential Extensions SPD states that development should ‘respect the original dwelling with careful design’ (p.20), and further that ‘the scale, proportion and height of an extension should respect the character of the existing building unless there is a strong justification for an alternative approach and should fit unobtrusively with the building and its settings. The form of extension should be well proportioned and present a satisfactory composition with the house. The extension should normally be roofed to match the existing building in shape (p.12). This statement is supported by policies EN1 which states that ‘the form of the proposed development would respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area’.
- 21 There is a previous planning consent for this site still valid, which is discussed later in this analysis.
- 22 The proposed building would be positioned in the same location as the existing and the previously approved, although with minor alterations to the footprint to produce a more formal rectangular shape than the existing footprint. The proposed therefore respects existing building lines on Bullfinch Lane.
- 23 The proposal building maintains the existing gaps between the property and the properties either side.
- 24 The proposed building (9.7 metres) would be higher than the existing building (5.9 metres) by some 3.8 metres. The previous permission, which is still to be commenced but the permission remains valid, is 2.5 metres higher at its highest point than that the current building. Thus the proposed extension in this application is a further 1.3 metres higher than previously approved. The proposed roofline will be the same height as the neighbours to the west, where as under the 2013 consent it was half way between the roof heights of the building either side, fitting the building into the streetscene in a more respectable fashion. I am therefore concerned that the proposed plan does not respect the existing street scene, although the eaves height of the proposed building is sensitive to the neighbouring properties, alleviating these concerns slightly. I am also concerned that the proposed building would not reflect the topography of the street by providing an appropriate transition between the two buildings on either side

- 25 One of my concerns is with the design of the roof. The Residential Character Assessment makes mention of the roof designs in the Bullfinch area, with hipped roofs and gabled porches being the prominent design, although a wide variety of individualised roofs exist. The proposed large singular gable roof is not a characteristic of the area, and thus the building would be unique in this sense and overtly stand out. Whilst the applicant has discussed this in their Design and Access Statement, I feel little attempt has been made to integrate this into the design. Overall, I am concerned that as proposed it would present a very tall, prominent and solid face exacerbated by the proposed window configuration which lacks any coherence or alignment, and the character assessment for the area shows a stronger tradition for well articulated buildings incorporating recessed or projecting elements (including hipped roofs) which can help to break down the mass and bulk of a buildings volume
- 26 I am also concerned at the lack of proposed detailing on the fenestration, with the large hanging tiled area to the front and given the rather small windows proposed at the front elevation, producing a rather large uncharacteristic form of development with a distinct lack of detail. The Residential Character Area Assessment is clear that detailing should be retained, and detailing, particularly within tiling works at first floor elevations, are a feature of the area. The Residential Character Area assessment also discusses that rounded windows, chimneys, porches and decorative finishes are a distinctive character of the area, all of which are not included in the proposed development.
- 27 The proposed windows at the front elevation are not particularly attractive and have little surrounding detailing. They do not align with one another horizontally as discussed in the Residential Extensions SPD and I feel that the positioning of two small windows at the front elevation, rather than one larger window produces an uncomfortable appearance that is not characteristic of the area. The lack of detailing within the windows is also inconsistent with that typical for the area and is not an attractive design either within its setting nor within the building proposed. Overall the design of the front elevation is rather incoherent and unattractive.
- 28 I am also concerned that bay windows and/or porches are a characteristic of the front elevation of buildings in this area that has been missed from the proposal. Porches are critical in producing a three-dimensional building frontage in order to compliment the character of the area and the missing out of such detailing identifies a lack of consideration of the wider character of the area and the setting in which the development is being proposed. The porch that is proposed is extremely minimal, of low quality design and has a flat roof, against the guidance within the Residential Extensions SPD.
- 29 In summary of the above, the design of the proposed building is of lower quality than the existing and previously approved and has a simple bland tone to it that would be out of keeping with the surrounding area, as outlined within the Residential Character Assessment which defines the development in the area and which has been maintained well historically.
- 30 To the rear elevation, I consider that the proposed use of bi-folding doors is acceptable at ground level. The proposed use of double doors and Juliet balcony at first floor level is acceptable in design principle, though the neighbouring amenity impact is discussed below.

- 31 The previously approved scheme for this site, in 2013, was of a good quality design that fit well within the Residential Character Area. The roof and eaves height was perfectly proportioned and half way between the two properties either side, allowing it to fit into the roofline. It had a large bay window at the front elevation, at both ground and first floor. The approval contained detailed brickwork, fenestration design features, a chimney and a hipped roof, matching the neighbouring properties. For this reason I feel the applicant's potential 'fall-back' position is greatly more acceptable in regards to the Residential Character Assessment Area and Residential Extensions SPD.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 32 Policy EN2 – Amenity Protection of the ADMP states that 'Proposals will be permitted where they would provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development and would safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties' (pp.19).
- 33 The replacement building would be larger than the existing and thus some additional impact on the amenity of the neighbouring building is inevitable, given the proximity of dwellings to one another in this area.
- 34 The proposed Juliet balcony to the rear of the property increases the risk of overlooking into the neighbouring properties amenity space, although the siting of each of the neighbouring buildings means that the occupants of the proposed building would not be able to see into the neighbouring property, nor the amenity area directly behind the houses. I am not concerned that properties to the rear would be impacted, as there is a significant distance between the applicant property and those behind.
- 35 I am also concerned at the proposed window at the first floor level to the east, which appears to face directly into the neighbouring property. However, this window can be obscured by condition.
- 36 With regards to the 45 degree test outlined in the Residential Extensions SPD, I do not believe that the proposal will cause a significant loss of the light to the neighbouring property to the east (No.34), and the area of lost light to the west will fall upon a garage type building which would not be overly negatively impacted by such loss of light and would not cause the loss of residential amenity.
- 37 With regards to the property to the west (No.30), I am concerned that some loss of light may be suffered to the side extension, however it is not to a 'habitable' room, and as such the loss of light will not be significantly more detrimental to that currently experienced.

Landscape

- 38 Details have been submitted of proposed landscaping works to the property plot. It is proposed that the existing driveway entrance be widened by 1 metres towards the west (towards centre of site) and that a retaining wall be built to replace the existing. It is also proposed that a new area of hardstanding is constructed to the front of the property.

Archaeological Potential

39 The applicant has provided an email from KCC Archaeological Team, who have written that 'the small scale nature of the proposed development' means that 'the chances of finding Palaeolithic remains is quite low' and that 'no archaeological work is need for this development'.

40 As a result of the above, I see no need to require further information.

CIL

41 This planning application is considered CIL Liable and no exception has been sought.

Conclusion

42 The proposed redevelopment of the existing bungalow into the new two storey house with occupied roofspace is not considered acceptable with regards to policies EN1 and EN2 of the ADMP.

43 The proposed design of the building is not complimentary to the character of the area, which is inter-war, and is not sensitive to the typical roof design nor elevational features that are common, for example porches and bay windows. The proposed lack of detailing and features, results in an inappropriate form and there will be a large blank area of hung tiling with little design features around windows and doors, which I consider to a modern bland take in an area of significant design quality. These comments reflect the contradiction between the design and policy EN1 of the ADMP, and the Sevenoaks Residential Character Assessment, and the proposal will detract from the visual amenity of the locality.

Background Papers

Site and Block Plan

Contact Officer(s): Matthew Besant Extension: 7136

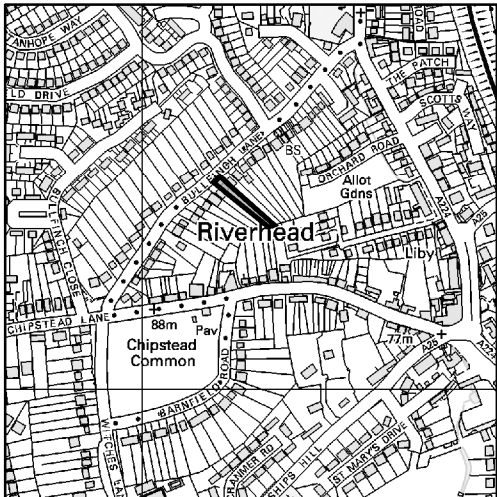
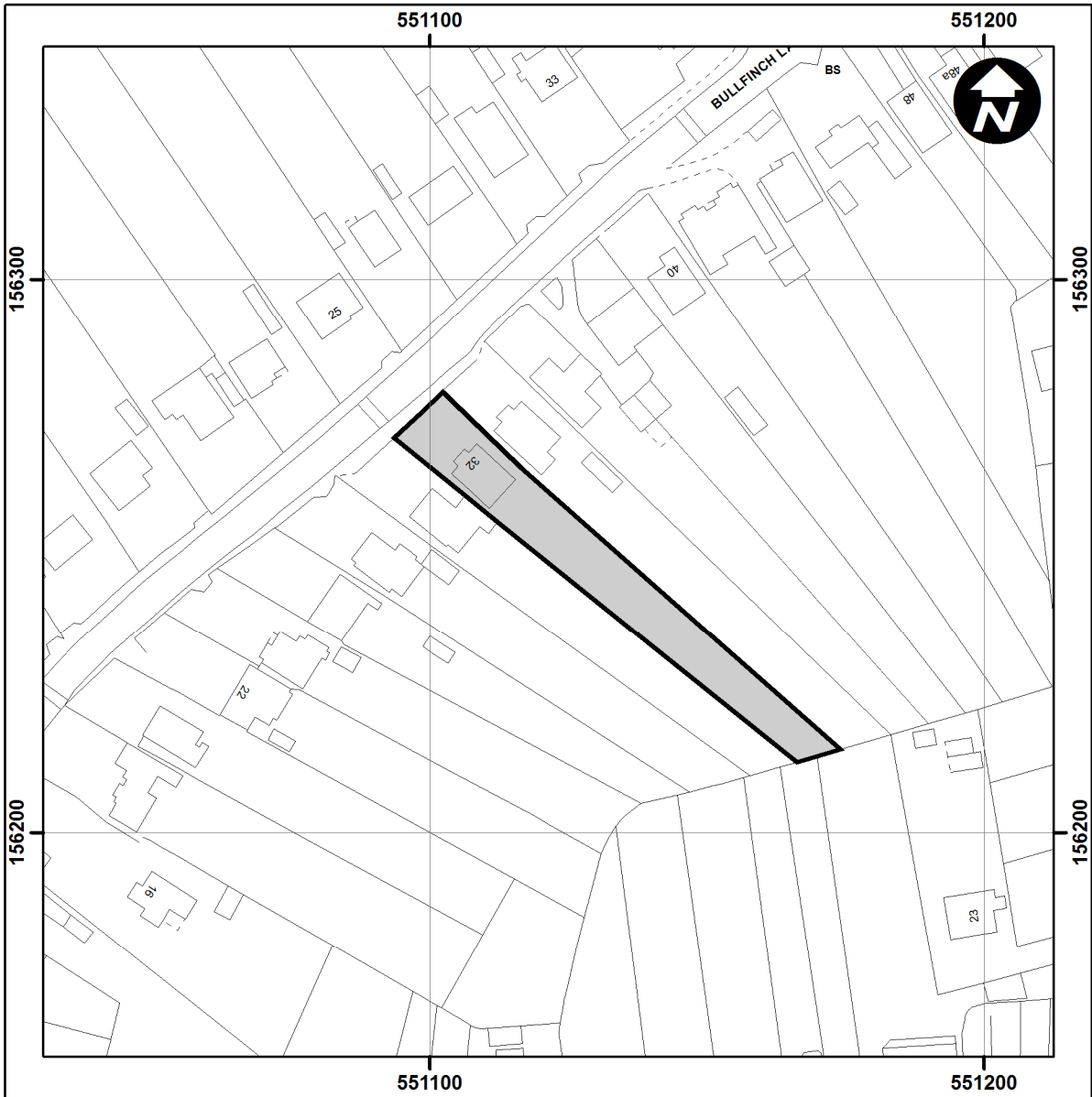
Richard Morris - Chief Planning Officer

Link to application details:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=NRSN7JBKLP400>

Link to associated documents:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NRSN7JBKLP400>



Site Plan

Scale 1:1,250

Date 10/09/2015



Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Ordnance Survey 100019428.

Block Plan

