

4.2- SE/16/00066/HOUSE Revised expiry date 29 March 2016

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing garage and shed. Erection of a single storey rear and side extension together with alteration to entrance gateway and swimming pool in garden.

LOCATION: Kent House , The Green, Otford, Sevenoaks TN14 5PE

WARD(S): Otford & Shoreham

ITEM FOR DECISION

This application has been referred to Development Control Committee by Councillor Edwards-Winsor as he feels it is contrary to policies EN1 and EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, in that it does not enhance the adjacent listed properties, neither does it better reveal them.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) No development shall be carried out on the land until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall be carried out using the approved materials. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

To maintain the integrity and character of the building and street as supported by EN1 and EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

3) No development shall be carried out on the land until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a "watching brief". This shall be undertaken by an archaeologist approved in writing by the Council so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it is fundamental to the development permitted to address this issue before development commences and that without this safeguard planning permission should not be granted.

To investigate and record archaeological features as supported by Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with

the following approved plans: 1455 - 06c; 08c; 07c; 09c; 10b; DJ1; DJ2; DJ3

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

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) Was provided the opportunity to submit amendments which led to improvements to the acceptability of the proposal.

Description of Proposal

- 1 Demolition of existing floor roof garage.
- 2 Erection of extension of 9.9m in depth, 5.1m in width (2.4 of which would be sideward of the existing side wall). Extension of 2.6m to eaves, 4.3m to ridge. Extension to be clad white to match existing building.
- 3 Replacement of existing wooden gate on highway elevation with iron bar gate of same height in same location.

Description of Site

- 4 The site consists of Kent House which is located within the built urban confines of Otford. Kent House is located on The Green which abuts the roundabout of Otford Pond. Within the immediate vicinity of the application site there are a mixture of properties, many of which are Listed, exhibiting a variety of uses.
- 5 The site is located within the Otford Conservation Area and is located adjacent to the Grade II Listed Corner House which is to the north of the application site. The site is located within the Kent Downs AONB but not within the Green Belt.

Constraints

- 6 Otford Conservation Area
- 7 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Kent Downs
- 8 Listed Wall at Front of Site
- 9 Neighbouring Listed Building - 'The Corner House'
- 10 Opposite Listed Feature - 'Otford Pond'
- 11 Area of Archaeological Potential

Policies

ADMP:

- 12 Policies - EN1, EN2, EN4, EN5, EN7

Core Strategy:

- 13 Policies - SP1

Other

- 14 Residential Extension SPD
- 15 Otford Village Design Guide
- 16 Otford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Planning History

- 17 15/03407/HOUSE - Demolition of existing garage and shed. Single storey rear and side extension together with alterations to entrance gateway and swimming pool in garden. - Refused - 04.01.16

11/01576/FUL - Alterations including 1/2 storey front and second storey rear extensions: raising of roof to side to achieve balanced hip roof ends, gables, balcony, covered porches and loggias. Installation of windows of

similar design and bay window features. Amendments to SE/10/01495/FUL condition no. 2 materials. - Granted - 16.08.2011

10/01495/FUL - Alterations including 1/2 storey front and second storey rear extensions. Raising of roof height to side to achieve balanced hip roof ends, gables, balcony, covered porches and loggias. Installation of windows of similar design and bay window features. - Granted - 02.08.2010

04/00223/FUL - New additions and rear extension over existing single storey wings of two storey detached dwelling. - Granted - 30.03.2004

Consultations

Otford Parish Council - Objection

- 18 *The proposed development does not comply with EN1 and EN4 of the ADMP within a Conservation Area.*

The proposed development does not enhance the neighbouring Listed Building (The Corner House).

Although the utility area has been removed, this has been replaced by a white faced end wall which will be clearly visible from the street and impacts on the street scene in this sensitive Conservation Area.

The untypical metal trellised gate will do material harm to the character of the Conservation Area and produce a fortified appearance to the development.

The development significantly increases the footprint of the property with the result that the garden area at the rear of the property is considerably reduced.

- 19 After a change in gate design, the Parish commented (Objection):

The amended application does nothing to ameliorate the previous comment in that the untypical metal trellised gate will do material harm to the character of the Conservation Area and produce a fortified appearance to the development.

Conservation Officer - Objection -

- 20 *Kent House is a converted and remodelled former Police Station, occupying a prominent location on the western edge of The Green, in the Otford conservation area. The building is part of an extensive group of Grade II designated heritage assets which includes inter alia, the neighbouring dwelling to the north, the front boundary wall, the adjacent telephone kiosk and the Village pond. Long views exist in all directions across the open space of The Green and the group as a whole makes a notable contribution to the distinctive qualities of the conservation area.*

Front boundary treatment

- 21 *Reasonable evidence has been provided to substantiate the claim that the southern gate pier is of no historic interest and in consequence, there is no objection to the proposed alteration. There is also no objection in principle to the installation a front gate, as it is independently mounted and will have no impact on the fabric of the listed wall. However, there is some concern over the design of the gate. The host wall and adjacent boundary treatments are modest and somewhat rustic in character. In this context, the proposed gate appears inappropriately modern and 'grand', and a more traditionally styled timber gate should be proposed. The listing description of the boundary wall identifies all the elements fronting the Green as being part of a historically significant group and it is important to maintain the present cohesive character.*

Rear/side addition

- 22 *The existing out buildings are of no consequence from the conservation perspective and there is no objection to their demolition. Construction of a modestly scaled rear addition is acceptable in principle, as the presence of the new element will be barely perceptible from The Green. However, in order to avoid crowding the neighbouring listed building and obscuring an important gap between two buildings of disparate form and style, the new work should not project beyond the existing northern building line of Kent House.*

Conclusion

- 23 *Although there is no objection in principle to the installation of a front gate and construction of a modestly scaled and discretely sited rear addition, the proposal in the present form harms the significance of a number of designated heritage assets.*
- 24 *Para 137 of the NPPF states that new development within conservation areas and the settings of listed buildings should 'enhance or better reveal' the significance of the designated heritage assets. The present proposal does neither, as it crowds the neighbouring listed building, obstructs an important gap and introduces a gate of alien appearance to a historic and visually prominent frontage.*
- 25 *The proposal is thus contrary to Para. 132 of the NPPF, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and notes that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration and unsympathetic development. Refusal of the proposal in the present form is therefore recommended in terms of Policy EN4.*

Oxford Heritage Society - Objection

- 26 *The application seeks to increase the area of the building to [at] least 175% of the original dwelling, resulting in overdevelopment in this, the iconic corner of this historic village..... Together with the proposed swimming pool in what is left of the garden, cannot but be detrimental to the neighbouring properties.*

- 27 *We therefore urge rejection of the inappropriate application to further enlarge the dwelling. The site is within the area enclosed by Listed form boundary wall of a substantial dwelling, a ‘capital messuage’ occupied by one Richard Goodall, gent, in 1605, which was built hereabouts sometime in the sixteenth century, and of which very little is known.*
- 28 *Should SDC be minded to grant this latest application despite the local opposition due to its scale and inappropriateness to the location, it should certainly be subject to an Archaeological condition’.*

Representations

- 29 Neighbour Objection - Concern over mass; proximity to Corner House; visual impact on Listed Asset ‘Otford Pond’; Increase in footprint of ‘80%; impact on amenity (light) to Corner House residents; untypical metal gate; fails to provide ‘*positive architectural benefit*’.

Chief Planning Officer’s Appraisal

Previous Alterations to the Building

- 30 The property subject to this application has undergone significant works in the recent past, approved under the references within the history section above.
- 31 The scheme involved the erection of front and rear extensions. The front extension facilitated the use of a hall and cloakroom at ground floor level and a study at first floor level. The rear extension facilitated an extension to an existing bedroom and extension of an en-suite. The first floor rear extension is a covered open porch and loggias. Both included roof pitched. The roof height of the property at the northern end was increased to match the southern end and timber windows were installed.

Principal Issues

- 32 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.
- 33 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).
- 34 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).

Demolition

- 35 Part of this application requires the demolition of an existing garage and shed. The garage and shed are both relatively modern addition to the plot, and are of no value to the Conservation Area or setting of the Listed Buildings or 'Important Grouping'. I conclude that the demolition of the garage and shed are satisfactory in the Conservation Area.

Impact on character and appearance of the area

- 36 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).
- 37 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.*
- 38 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*'.
- 39 The NPPF (para.132) states that '*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*', which is described as including that assets setting.
- 40 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on a local planning authority, in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses.
- 41 Policy EN4 of the ADMP states that '*proposals that affect a Heritage Asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset*'. In this case the Otford Conservation Area is the designated asset along with the Listed Buildings and assets (the Corner House and Pond).

Setting of adjacent Listed Building

- 42 The previous scheme brought the extension to the rear along the side of the applicant building, bringing the eaves in close proximity to the Corner House and thus removing the gap between the buildings. The new proposal removes this proposed side element through the removal of the proposed utility room and thus maintains the gap between the properties. The extension to the rear still extends further towards the Corner House building, but replaces a garage in closer proximity to the neighbour than the proposed extension it to be; the garage is 0.5m from the side boundary, whereas the proposed extension leaves a gap of 1m. Considering the Conservation Officer comments on crowding, I note that the proposed extension is now set back 1.4m from Corner House and a gap of 1m remains when viewed from the front. The increase in the height of the roof from the existing garage to the proposed extension does not create additional harm in the 'crowding' sense, as the increase in height is further away from Corner House. The eaves of the extension are lower and further away from Corner House than the existing garage. I feel that consideration should be given to the 3.2m high parapet wall on the front elevation of the existing garage, which from the front increases its visual bulk; this would not result in perceived over crowding. It is therefore the case that from the front elevation the new building would result in a visual reduction in bulk. I consider the existing garage harms to the setting of the Listed Corner House as well as Kent House. Overall, I consider the proposed extension to enhance the setting of the Listed Building and Conservation Area, thus meeting the requirements of EN4.
- 43 It has been commented that the proposed would result in an 80% addition to the floorspace of the property. A rough estimate details current footprint at around 120 sqm, and the proposals being somewhere near 50 sq m representing around a 40% increase on present. It is also noted that the applicant property is a two storey property, and that the extension is a single storey. It is thus the case that the bulk increase is significantly lower than may be suggested based on footprint alone.

Conservation Area

- 44 The pitched roof atop the extension, and the proposed materials, are more suited to the character of the property than the existing flat roofed modern garage currently set back from the property. The use of wooden cladding on the external elevations and a tiled roof are suitable and will help the form of the building set into the existing. It is worth considering that from the street, only one pitch if the gable roof would be visible. There would also be a considerable set-back from the main house. I do not consider that the extension would be any more visible than the existing garage; I do however consider it would be better 'tied' into Kent House given the use of matching materials, thus characteristically distancing itself from the Corner House. I thus consider that the comments of the Parish Council have been little through out with regards to the existing development on the site.
- 45 The remainder of the extension is relatively well hidden from the street by virtue of its being set back from the road and being screened by the

applicant property and the Corner House. Nevertheless, the proposed materials and design are acceptable. The use of large glass doors to the rear and not uncharacteristic of the existing rear elevation and I do not consider that these will harm the character of the building. The infilling of an open area at the ground floor to the rear of the property, currently overhung by the first floor, is acceptable and not visible from the street, nor harmful to the buildings character.

- 46 The proposed chimney and dove-cot roof vent on the new element are acceptable in design and help to break up the roofline in a suitable way.
- 47 The installation of the proposed pool to the rear elevation is acceptable and not harmful to the streetscene nor Conservation Area.
- 48 Overall, with regards to the proposed extension, I am satisfied that the proposal complies with EN1 of the ADMP, in that the scale, bulk and materials proposed are suitable; I am also satisfied that EN4 of the ADMP is complied with in that I do not consider the setting of the Listed Corner House to be impacted, or the Conservation Area harmed. I consider that the proposed will enhance the Conservation Area in comparison to the existing garage.

Gates

- 49 Giving consideration to the front gate that forms part of the proposal, the removal of a section of the non-listed section of pillar to the south is not in itself considered harmful. The pillar to the south of the entrance (drawings 'left') is not subject to the Listing. The plans show that no works are to take place to the wall subject to the Listing (drawing 'right'), and it can be seen that a pillar behind the wall will prevent the gate from contacting the existing wall. The railway style gate is appropriate in design and appearance.
- 50 However, I have taken to opportunity to research gates in the surrounding area, giving particular notice to the gate at the northern elevation of the Corner House building, which is of the same design as that proposed. The applicants have revised the gate design, with a significantly reduced bulk, although of a similar height to the previously proposed. I am satisfied that the proposal is of no harm to the character of the Conservation Area, and conserves it through the installation of a gate as representative of the characteristic of the area as the gate currently installed.
- 51 I disagree with the Parish Council that the gate submitted is 'untypical' and consider it to be distinctly typical of the area; the Listed Corner House' gate forms the blueprint upon which the applicant's gate was designed.
- 52 Further reviewing gates around the pond, it seems that there are a variety of gate designs and it is true that many are constructed of wood. However, I do not consider that a typical Iron Gate design is 'harmful'. It has been identified that metal railway gates can be found at both 23 High Street and the Corner House, both of which are prominent in the Conservation Area.

- 53 I consider the gate would be proportional to the adjoining wall, and would be suitable within the context of the surrounding building. The proposed gates would conserve the character of the Conservation Area.

(Consideration of Comments)

- 54 It is noted that reference EN23 is made within a detailed public comment, this policy formed part of the 'Local Plan' 2000 with regards to Conservation Areas and no longer forms part of the Councils policy considerations. Policy EN4 of the ADMP has been considered in its place.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 55 Policy EN5 of the ADMP reads '*The Kent downs and High Weald AONB and their settings will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Proposals within the AONB will be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design would conserve and enhance the character of the landscape*'.
56 In this instance I am confident that the extension will be entirely seen within the context of existing built form. Otford forms part of the scenic beauty of the AONB and this is particularly reflected in the area around 'the Pond', which has a particularly strong 'Rural Idle' appearance to it. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the extension to Kent House will form only a very small part of its setting, and will not detract from the character of the area. I am not convinced it will increase the overall sense of built form, largely by virtue of its significant set back from the street. The use of matching materials to the main house will tie it into the character of the house and thus the area. The proposed extension is better designed than the existing structures and as such would conserve and enhance the character of the AONB.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 57 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).
58 The proposal will harm the amenity of the Corner House residents. I assess that the eaves height of the proposed extension is lower than that of the existing garage and is further away from the side boundary. Whilst the pitched roof is ultimately higher than the existing garages roof, and despite the visibility of the roof from the Corner house, I do not consider this represents harm to the amenity of the nearby residents. No overshadowing effect is expected when measured at elevation, and no additional overlooking is proposed. Given the 2.4m high boundary treatment between the two sites, no additional tunnelling effect would be created from the rear windows of the Corner House. The ridge height is higher than the existing boundary, but as it leans away from the Corner House site I consider the harm to be insignificant.

- 59 Further to the above, consultation comments received regarding the additional noise from the building and pool do not seem founded given residential nature of the development proposed, and the existing elevated background noise in the locality as a result of vehicular movements and pedestrian/ residential noise.
- 60 Regarding the residential dwellings to the south, there is sufficient distance to produce no harm.

Noise

- 61 Consideration is given to comments regarding an increase in noise as a result of the application. It is noted that a pool is proposed as part of the proposal and that this has raised concerns with regards to noise.
- 62 Policy relating to this matter can be considered to be EN2 (amenity) and EN7 (noise). EN7 of the ADMP reads that proposals will be permitted where *‘Development would not have an unacceptable impact when considered against the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment including existing and future occupiers of the development and the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties’*.
- 63 In this instance I am satisfied that the proposal for a pool is normal residential activity. Given that the proposal includes a building between the applicant’s pool and the neighbouring Corner House, there will be a significant noise barrier between the applicants property. However, even without this I am not convinced that there would be a reasonable justification to refuse an application for a pool based purely on noise alone, which can be assumed to be entirely for residential purposes.

Conclusion

- 64 Consideration has been given to a number of relevant policies:
- EN1 - I am satisfied that the proposal complies with EN1 as I consider the design, scale and materials to be suitable to the character of the existing building. The gates at the front elevation are considered acceptable.
- EN2 - Amenity is protected, as demonstrated using the 45 degree test within the ADMP and with regards to Noise (EN7).
- EN4 - I am satisfied that the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Building has been conserved, and enhanced through the removal of the existing flat roofed garage and replacement with a much less harmful and characteristically more typical extension. I am satisfied that the gates at the front elevation area suited to the area.
- EN5 - I am satisfied that the character of the AONB is protected.
- 65 Consideration has been given to all comments received from the public and consultees and I am satisfied that this proposal enhances the character of the area.

Recommendation

66 Approval

Background Papers

Site and Block Plans

Contact Officer(s): Matthew Besant Extension: 7136

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Link to application details:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=00SSR2BKGMG00>

Link to associated documents:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=00SSR2BKGMG00>

Block Plan

