

4.1 21/01708/HOUSE

Revised expiry date 10 September 2021

Proposal: Proposed two storey side extension, single storey rear extensions and alterations.

Location: Peelers, Long Barn Road, Sevenoaks Weald KENT TN14 6NJ

Ward(s): Seal & Weald

#### **Item for decision**

This application has been called to Committee by Councillor Thornton for the following planning reasons:

1. Impact of the bulk, scale and ridge height of the proposal on the character of the street scene and on the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area and contrary to the guidance outlined within the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (in particular, paragraph 4.31).
2. Impact of the glazing and scale of the dormer, on the character of the house, street scene and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), contrary to the guidance outlined within the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (paragraph 4.36)
3. Impact of suburban light pollution on long-range views towards the village across the Green Belt & AONB from the excessive use of glazing on the new top storey, most particularly when viewed from Dale Farm, Hubbards Hill and Gracious Lane and, in Bayleys Hill; from Gracious Lane End and from properties on the south side of White House Road.

**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) The second floor window(s) in the south-west facing elevation(s) of the development hereby permitted shall be glazed with obscure glass of no less than obscurity level 3 and permanently fixed shut, unless the parts of the window/s which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which the window is installed and shall thereafter be permanently retained as such.

To safeguard the privacy of the occupants of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

- 3) Prior to the installation of glazing to the rear-facing dormer hereby approved, details of measures to reduce light spillage from the juliet balcony

glazing shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in writing, for approval. The approved glazing measures shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the dormer space.

To preserve the dark skies and long range views across open countryside within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in accordance with Policy EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, and policy L08 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

4) Prior to the completion of the development hereby approved, a site plan showing details of ecological enhancements to be provided on-site, along with specific product descriptions, shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the timings detailed on the site plan, and retained thereafter.

To demonstrate ecological enhancements which contribute to securing a new biodiversity gain within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in accordance with Policy EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, and policies L08 and SP11 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

5) The materials to be used in the construction of the development shall be those indicated on the approved plan 200-06 Rev A.

To maintain the integrity and character of the Conservation Area and Kent Downs AONB as supported by policies EN1 and EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

6) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details: 200-01, 200-04 Rev A, 200-05 Rev A, 200-06 Rev A

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

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

In dealing with this application we have implemented the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant/agent in a positive, proactive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service; as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible and if applicable suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome. We have considered the application in light of our statutory policies in our development plan as set out in the officer's report.

### **Description of site**

- 1 The site contains a detached two-storey dwelling located on the North West side of Long Barn Road. This road forms a southern approach to the settlement of Sevenoaks Weald.

- 2 The site is within the built confines of Sevenoaks Weald and is situated within the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area as well as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 3 The area is residential and the site is bound by residential dwellings to its north, south and east. Longer views over open countryside and adjacent Green Belt land lie to the west.
- 4 Dwellings are set along a varied building line, positioned at different setbacks from the road. The dwelling itself is set forward of its neighbours along the road, and includes a front lawn and hardstanding, with space for parking two vehicles.
- 5 Some backland developments are present, and the northern boundary of the site lies adjacent to a parking area and secondary access point for a neighbouring dwelling called Nutfield, which lies over 50 metres to the west (rear) of the site.
- 6 Dwellings are set on spacious plots, are generally detached and of two storeys. Building heights, buildings scales and architectural detailing vary across the street scene.

#### **Description of proposal**

- 7 The proposal is for a two storey side extension to the house which includes raising the ridge height of the house by approximately 0.5 metres, from a hipped to gable-end design.
- 8 The proposal also includes a single storey rear lean-to extension and conservatory. The front porch of the dwelling is being amended in roof profile and would remain of a single-storey height. The existing garage is to be converted to habitable living space.

#### **Relevant planning history**

- 9 86/00004/HIST - Extensions and alterations to house. Granted.
- 10 86/01738/HIST - Erections of extensions incorporating a garage and store. Granted.

#### **Policies**

- 11 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 12 Core Strategy (CS)
  - L01 Distribution of Development
  - L07 Development in Rural Settlements
  - L08 The Countryside and the Rural Economy
  - SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
  - SP11 Biodiversity

13 Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)

- EN1 Design Principles
- EN2 Amenity Protection
- EN4 Heritage Assets
- EN5 Landscape
- T2 Vehicle Parking

14 Other:

- The Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan SPD
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021 - 2026

**Constraints**

15 The following constraints apply:

- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area
- Urban Confines of Sevenoaks Weald
- Tree Preservation Order on south east boundary of site (neighbouring oak tree)

**Consultations**

16 Weald Parish Council - objection lodged

17 The raising of the ridge line and the extension over the former garage adds considerable bulk to the existing property and does not add visual amenity to the street scene or the area (4.31 of SDC's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document states that the increasing of the roof height in such circumstances should be avoided)

18 The proposed dormer windows on the property are not sympathetic, or in keeping, with the street scene (4.36 of the above Document applies).

19 The rear design of the property, including a Juliet balcony on the new top floor and a dormer window will result in an unacceptable loss of privacy to the residents living behind the property (4.37 of the above document applies).

20 Tree Officer - no comment

**Representations**

21 One letter of objection has been received raising the following issues:

- Loss of privacy
- Obtrusive outlook and view

## Chief Planning Officer's appraisal

- 22 Policy SP1, in line with paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, highlights there is a presumption in favour of Sustainable Development and planning applications, which accord with the policies in a Local Plan, should be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 23 The material planning considerations in this instance are as follows:
- Size, design and impact on street scene and the Conservation Area (CA)
  - Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
  - Impact on the amenity of occupants and neighbours of the development
  - Other issues

### Size, design and impact on street scene and Conservation Area (CA)

- 24 The site is located within the built settlement confines of Sevenoaks Weald, and Policy LO7 of the Core Strategy allows for development on a small scale only, taking account of the more limited range of services and facilities available in rural settlements.
- 25 Policy LO7 and SP1 of the Core Strategy, and Policy EN1 of the ADMP, further require new development to be designed to a high quality and to respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated, informed by local character area assessments.
- 26 The Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document advises that in order to successfully integrate into their surroundings, extensions to dwellings should respect the existing scale, building lines and the spaces between buildings.
- 27 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a requirement on a local planning authority, in relation to development in a Conservation Area, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 28 Interpretation of the 1990 Act in law has concluded that preserving the character of the Conservation Area can not only be accomplished through positive contribution but also through development that leaves the character or appearance of the area unharmed.
- 29 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.
- 30 The site is situated within the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area.
- 31 The Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area and Management Plan (hereafter referred to as the CAA SPD) describes Sevenoaks Weald as a village centred around the village green, with a loosely arranged grouping of buildings of various ages, styles and sizes, but forming a coherent whole.

- 32 The built form, verdant setting and views contribute to the special interest of the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area, as outlined within the CAA SPD. The impact on these features is discussed in turn below.
- 33 Assessment of Impact:
- 34 Third parties have expressed concern that the bulk, scale and ridge height would not be in keeping with the Conservation Area and would be contrary to the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document.
- 35 Paragraph 4.3.1 of this SPD advises that increasing the roof height of a dwelling can have a significant impact on the dwelling and street scene and should be avoided. Loft extensions should be below the ridge height of the existing building and not create the appearance of an extra storey, which would be unsympathetic to the character of the area.
- 36 As the SPD offers general guidance, this design guidance must be applied to the local context of the area - in this instance Long Barn Road.
- 37 Amended drawings have been submitted which have reduced the total ridge height of the dwelling to approximately 7.9m. This would present an increase to the total height of the dwelling by 0.5m - and increase the lowest ridgeline of the house by approximately 1.4m.
- 38 The street scene of Long Barn Road has many dwellings of this ridge height (and greater ridge heights, exceeding 8 metres) and there are a range of dwellings across the street scene of varied architectural design, scale, roof profile and heights and setbacks from the highway. As such, the proposed height of the dwelling would remain compatible with that of neighbouring properties.
- 39 The inclusion of modestly scaled front gable detailing introduces a degree of articulation, which would help break up the visual massing of the front elevation. The proposal would also maintain the existing generous spacing between neighbouring dwellings and build upwards over existing built form, rather than expand the built footprint significantly across the site.
- 40 As referred to within the Residential Extensions SPD, extensions should be proportionate to the scale of a house, and loft conversions (including dormers) should remain proportionate to the roof plane.
- 41 The proposed dormer would be sited to the rear of the dwelling, where much of its bulk and scale would be screened from the street scene by the house itself and by existing mature vegetation across the street scene, which would largely screen the dormer in views from the north and west. As the dormer would be inset from the sides of the roof plane and the ridge height and eaves of the dwelling, I consider it proportionate to the enlarged roof. I consider it would be read discreetly against the existing backdrop of the house in long-range views looking east.
- 42 The side profile of the dormer would be visible from views looking southwards along the street scene, however the verdant setting of the street scene would soften its appearance and the hung clay tiles to the

dormer cheeks would assist the dormer in blending into the existing context of the house.

- 43 As such, I do not consider the altered ridgeline and extension over the garage to be of excessive bulk and scale, with the side extension and roof conversion (including dormer) remaining within the existing footprint of the house.
- 44 No landscaping changes are proposed and the site would retain an existing grass lawn and conserve nearby mature trees and vegetation. As a result, the enlarged dwelling would remain softened by its verdant surroundings and conserve the natural features of the site and neighbouring sites.
- 45 Whilst development centres around the village green, the village has expanded in all directions and the CAA SPD highlights the informal and random siting of development to the north, south and west of the green, particularly along Long Barn Road where newer houses have been erected in spaces, and are of no special merit. This description is typical of the application site, which constitutes a dwelling of a random siting, set forward of its nearest neighbouring dwellings, and of no particular architectural merit.
- 46 Surrounding dwellings across the street scene are of varied architectural designs, scales, roof profiles, heights and setbacks from the highway. As such, there is scope for differing architectural designs and scales across the area.
- 47 Whilst the dwelling may not display the positive architectural detailing which characterises a limited number of the buildings within the Conservation Area, it does reflect the general character of dwellings set comfortably within large plots.
- 48 The existing house is of a white painted brickwork with plain brown clay roof tiles. The proposed dwelling would utilise plain clay roof tiles and aluminium window frames to match the existing dwelling. The external finish of the walls proposed would be of a white painted render, reflecting the appearance of the existing house. In addition, clay tile hanging is proposed for the first floor level of the house. This tile hanging would visually break the massing between the ground and first floor levels of the dwelling, and provide architectural detailing of visual interest. Clay hung tiles are a typical first floor treatment of other dwellings across the conservation area and as such the proposed material palette would better reflect the surrounding street scene than the existing dwelling.
- 49 As a result, I consider the dwelling would represent an improved external appearance, which would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 50 In summary, I consider the height and massing of the building would be remain visually compatible with the scale of built form across the wider street scene of Long Barn Road and to preserve the informal and varied character of the built form, which typifies the Conservation Area.

- 51 Impact on the views, setting and topography:
- 52 The CAA SPD highlights the village green, and the informal arrangement of buildings nearby, as an important feature of the Conservation Area.
- 53 The backdrop of countryside is also significant, especially the view northwards to the church and to the higher ground of the ridge on which Sevenoaks itself stands.
- 54 To the south part of the allotment site has been included within the Conservation Area boundary, recognising its importance to the setting of the village green. Public footpaths are important assets, as they connect to adjacent countryside and to other parts of the village.
- 55 The CAA SPD further highlights that trees and hedges are integral to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 56 The dwelling is set on a spacious land plot with the dwelling benefitting from a large rear north-west facing garden and ample space to the immediate north of the site, where views towards open countryside to the west are visible from the street scene.
- 57 Dwellings along the road include front lawns and grass verges, which add to the verdant character of the area. A neighbouring oak tree is also situated in proximity to the house, on its southeast boundary and is protected under Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 58 As the proposal would maintain the spatial character of the plot and would largely utilise existing built footprint, rather than increase the spread of built form across the site, the long views of open countryside, looking westwards from the site, would be conserved. The siting of the dwelling would conserve all other viewpoints highlighted within the CAA SPD (views of the church, allotments, village green etc.) and would protect public footpaths between these spaces.
- 59 No landscaping changes are proposed and the site would retain an existing grass lawn. The contained siting of the built footprint would also conserve the roots of the nearby oak tree under TPO and the Tree Officer has raised no objection to the proposal.
- 60 As a result, the enlarged dwelling would remain softened by its verdant surroundings and conserve the natural features of the site and neighbouring sites.
- 61 In light of the above, the proposal would positively conserve views towards open countryside, and conserve the verdant, natural setting of built form, which contributes to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 62 In conclusion, by virtue of the dwellings contained footprint, scale and massing, together with the use of more appropriate materials, I consider the development would be compatible with its surroundings and would conserve the special interest of the Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area, in accordance with Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks ADMP.

## Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- 63 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that the Local Planning Authority should conserve and enhance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Designating an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty protects its distinctive character and natural beauty and can include human settlement and development.
- 64 There are therefore two considerations directly related to a site's AONB status when determining a planning application. Firstly, does the application conserve the AONB and secondly, if it does conserve the AONB does it result in an enhancement. A failure to achieve both of these points will result in a conflict with the requirements of the Act.
- 65 Policy EN5 of the ADMP states that the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty 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 will conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance. This is compatible with Policy LO8 of the Core Strategy which seeks to maintain the distinctive character of the countryside, including maintaining the extent of the Green Belt and conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of AONBs.
- 66 Assessment of impact:
- 67 The site is positioned in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan considers the aims and principles of managing change within the AONB, highlighting the need for both conservation and enhancement of the landscape.
- 68 The conservation of the landscape's tranquil and remote environments, its setting and views across the AONB, its dark skies, and the character and distinctiveness of villages, are all emphasised within the Management Plan.
- 69 The Management Plan further highlights landscape enhancements can be demonstrated through, for example carbon neutrality, and biodiversity net gain in accordance with the purposes of policy SP11 of the Core Strategy (which seeks to enhance biodiversity).
- 70 Third party representations have expressed concern over the impact of light pollution from the proposed glazing to the dwelling and new dormer on long views across the surrounding landscape, as well as the scale of the dormer.
- 71 With regards to the proposed glazing to the dwelling, this would be of a standard design, typical of glazing across dwellings within the built confines of settlements.
- 72 To the front of the dwelling, the window detailing would remain of a modest scale and rectangular form, in keeping with the scale and form of fenestration visible across the street scene.

- 73 To the rear, the glazing at the rear first floor level, and to serve the dormer en-suite at second floor level, is equally modest and typical of surrounding dwellings.
- 74 The floor to ceiling glazing proposed to the ground floor, whilst being of a larger scale than other glazing to the dwelling, would be limited in views westwards across the landscape due to the existing site boundary treatments, which would partially screen the glazing from long-range views. Such glazing exists on neighbouring developments (for example conservatories) visible across Long Barn Road.
- 75 The Juliet balcony to the dormer would also be of a larger scale than other fenestration to the dwelling. Given the glazing would not benefit from screening westwards it would be reasonable to impose a planning condition to secure details of measures to reduce light spillage from this window, to ensure the dwelling does not result in excessive light spillage to the open views and landscape westwards of the site.
- 76 Subject to a glazing condition, the proposed development would continue to conserve the darker skies associated with more rural settlements within the AONB (and adjacent Green Belt).
- 77 It would not be considered reasonable to refuse a scheme where impacts can be managed via planning condition. Given the dwelling is within an existing settlement, where light pollution from the dwelling and surrounding neighbours is an existing situation, a glazing condition need not be applied to the house as a whole, and would be focused on the Juliet balcony to the dormer.
- 78 The issue of bulk and scale has been discussed above.
- 79 It is my conclusion that the scale of extensions proposed to the dwelling would reflect the varied bulk, scale and heights of dwellings that typify this rural settlement within the AONB.
- 80 In addition, the site benefits from a large garden where ecological enhancements can be sought to demonstrate a net-biodiversity enhancement to the wider AONB.
- 81 Subject to planning conditions to limit light spillage from the dormer, and to secure ecological enhancements for the site, the scheme would both conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB, in accordance with Policies LO8 and EN5 of the Sevenoaks Development Plan.

#### **Impact on the amenity of occupants and neighbours of the development**

- 82 Policy EN2 of the ADMP states that development should safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of a development and of nearby properties.
- 83 Development should not subject residents to excessive noise, vibration, odour, overlooking (unacceptable loss of privacy), visual intrusion (loss of outlook) nor loss of light.

- 84 The Residential Extensions SPD provides further guidance on residential amenities.
- 85 Assessment
- 86 Third party representation has expressed concern over a loss of privacy, outlook and view from neighbouring dwellings, with specific reference to paragraph 4.37 of the Residential Extensions SPD. This paragraph states dormer/roof extensions resulting in unacceptable overlooking of neighbours will not be allowed. These matters are assessed below.
- 87 Privacy:
- 88 The existing dwelling already has an outlook to the north west of the site, which enables direct sightlines across the rear garden of the dwelling and towards Nutfield, the property to the rear. However, at over 50m to the house and amenity space immediately surrounding it, it would far exceed guidelines seeking to protect against overlooking and loss of privacy.
- 89 The proposed windows to the rear elevation of the dwelling would remain at the same angle of outlook as the existing windows to the rear of the house. As a result, the outlook towards neighbours would remain unchanged by the proposal and would continue to conserve the existing privacy of neighbouring dwellings.
- 90 Within the proposed rear-facing dormer, the Juliet balcony would remain flush with the existing rear walls of the dormer and no external balcony area would be created. As such, this design would restrict outlook from this window to that of an oblique view, as with windows of more standard designs, such as those at first floor level. Because of this, the Juliet balcony would preserve the existing privacy afforded to neighbouring dwellings (as with the windows on the existing house).
- 91 The remaining dormer window would serve an en-suite. The angle of outlook from this window would remain oblique and as such the existing privacy afforded to neighbours would be conserved. Furthermore, the existing first floor levels to the existing rear of the house are closer to the neighbours (Cherry Tree Cottage) than this new dormer window would be (which would be recessed in from the side elevations of the house). As such, no privacy conditions would be required for the rear facing windows or dormer windows of the proposed dwelling.
- 92 At second floor level, one side facing window would face directly towards the neighbours to the south (Cherry Tree Cottage) and a condition requiring this window to be obscure glazed can be secured to safeguard neighbouring privacy.
- 93 All remaining windows to the front of the dwelling, and the north-facing side window, would overlook the public realm and would not affect neighbouring privacy.

- 94 In summary, subject to one planning condition to obscure glaze the south-west facing second floor window proposed, the scheme would safeguard the existing privacy levels of all neighbouring dwellings.
- 95 Outlook:
- 96 The proposed development would be sited at an oblique angle to all neighbouring windows, whilst the development itself would largely be contained within the existing built footprint of the house itself.
- 97 By virtue of this siting, the proposal would conserve the immediate outlook of all neighbouring dwellings.
- 98 Whilst representation has been made about longer-range views towards the dwelling, the views of the dwelling from neighbouring properties would remain at an oblique angle and the planning process is unable to protect long-range views from neighbouring dwellings.
- 99 Light:
- 100 Because of the siting and separation to neighbouring houses there would be no significant loss of light and the proposal would pass the daylight and sunlight tests performed.
- 101 In summary, subject to one privacy condition to be applied to the south west facing second floor window of the development, the proposal would safeguard all residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings.

#### **Other issues**

- 102 In addition to the above, policy T2 of the Sevenoaks ADMP seeks to ensure satisfactory parking provision for domestic developments and to safeguard highways safety.
- 103 The site would retain an existing lawn and area of hardstanding for parking two vehicles off road, in accordance with local parking guidance, which recommends two independently accessible parking spaces be provided on site.
- 104 In addition, there are no on-street parking controls and the site would retain adequate sightlines onto the highway of Long Barn Road.
- 105 As such, the proposal would safeguard the existing safety of the highway and retain satisfactory parking for the development proposed.

#### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

- 106 The proposal would create over 100m of habitable internal floor area and would therefore be liable to pay CIL. There is no application for an exemption.

## Conclusion

- 107 The dwelling as proposed would be compatible with the visual appearance and scale of development which characterises built form across the southern section of Sevenoaks Weald and would preserve the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 108 Furthermore, subject to conditions for light spillage, ecological enhancements and privacy, the proposed scheme would both conserve and enhance the special character of the Kent Downs AONB and safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings.
- 109 It is therefore recommended that this application be GRANTED.

## Background papers

Site and block plan

Contact Officer(s):

Samantha Simmons: 01732 227000

**Richard Morris**  
**Chief Planning Officer**

[Link to application details:](#)

[Link to associated documents:](#)