

APPLICATION: MA/11/2127 Date: 12 December 2011 Received: 12 December 2011

APPLICANT: Mr John Thwaites

LOCATION: 34, DOWNS VIEW ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 2JF

PARISH: Maidstone

PROPOSAL: Two storey side extension and loft conversion with front and rear dormers as shown on drawing numbers 31.126.1., 31.126.2.B & 31.126.3. received on 12/12/11

AGENDA DATE: 26th January 2012

CASE OFFICER: Angela Welsford

The recommendation for this application is being reported to Committee for decision because:

- the applicant is an officer of the Council.

1. POLICIES

- Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000: H18, ENV6
- The South East Plan RSS 2009: BE1
- Government Policy: PPS1, PPS9
- Other: Maidstone Local Development Framework, Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2009.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 MA/11/1164 Erection of a two storey side extension and loft conversion to existing dwelling WITHDRAWN

MA/04/2396 Erection of a single storey side extension including new garage APPROVED

2.2 Planning permission MA/04/2396 was never implemented and has now lapsed.

2.3 MA/11/1164 was for a similar proposal to the current application, but that scheme showed a wider extension featuring a gable end and two front dormers, and was withdrawn before determination as it was considered unacceptable by officers. The applicant has subsequently engaged in extensive pre-application

discussions/written advice to design the scheme now proposed in the current application.

3. CONSULTATIONS

3.1 PARISH COUNCIL: Not applicable.

3.2 LANDSCAPE OFFICER: (verbal comments) The development would take place outside of the crown spreads of the trees, on a hard-surfaced area which is unlikely to contain any significant roots, so is unlikely to compromise their health. Trees are not worthy of a TPO, but contribute to amenity of the street so a standard tree protection condition should be attached to prevent storage of materials etc beneath them.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 None received to date.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The Site

5.1.1 The application site is located within the urban area of Maidstone and is not covered by any other special designations on the Local Plan proposals map.

5.1.2 It is a triangular-shaped corner plot located at the head of a cul-de-sac, and contains the right-hand one of a pair of semi-detached bungalows. Some ash and hawthorn trees mark the front part of the side boundary with the neighbour to the south-west, No. 32 Downs View Road. The land within the site slopes from south to north, following the natural incline of the road, such that the rear garden is set considerably higher than the front.

5.1.3 The bungalow has brick elevations beneath a fully-hipped, plain-tiled roof, and features a hipped bay window to its front elevation and a small projection to the rear which forms the kitchen. These are both elements of the original building, which has never been extended. There is a detached single garage to the right-hand side (west) of the bungalow.

5.2 The Proposal

5.2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a side extension and a loft conversion with front and rear dormers. These works would result in the removal of the garage.

5.2.2 The extension would have a footprint of approximately 4.3m wide by 8.3m deep, with eaves and ridge lines to match those of the existing building. It would feature a barn-hipped roof to create enough head-height for a very small upstairs w.c./shower room. All materials would match existing.

5.2.3 Both dormers would have flat roofs, in keeping with those on the chalet bungalows directly opposite. That to the front would be approximately 4.8m wide, and that to the rear 8.8m wide.

5.3 **Assessment**

5.3.1 As the site is a residential property located within the urban area, and is not covered by any other special environmental designations, the main relevant Local Plan policy to assess the proposal is H18. This policy permits extensions and additions to residential properties subject to a number of criteria intended to ensure that no harm is caused to the character of the host building or the area, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, or highway safety. Although not specifically listed under the criteria of Policy H18, any landscaping or ecological impacts also need to be considered.

5.4 **Visual Impact**

5.4.1 The existing bungalow is not considered to be of any particular architectural merit. It is set within a street-scene which is typically made up of semi-detached pairs of both conventional and chalet bungalows of broadly similar basic original designs, but a number of which have subsequently been extended. All the chalet bungalows directly opposite feature flat-roofed dormers to their front and side elevations, as does the adjacent pair to the east, (No.s 38-40 Downs View Road).

5.4.2 In these circumstances, I do not consider that the proposed extension or addition of flat-roofed dormers to this building would look out of place or cause any harm to the character of the street-scene. The front dormer would measure 4.8m in width as compared to the extended roof width of 10.9m. As such, it would only take up 44% of the roof width, plus would be set back 1.6m from the eaves and dropped 0.7m from the ridge. In my view, therefore, it would appear clearly subordinate on the roof slope, as required by the Council's adopted residential extensions guidelines. It would also be in keeping with those opposite in design terms. The rear dormer, whilst somewhat larger, would not be readily visible from public vantage points due to the configuration of adjoining buildings and vegetation. Nevertheless, it has been designed to retain a sufficient area of roof slope above, below and upon both sides of it to avoid an over-dominant appearance.

- 5.4.3 The width of the extension has been reduced in line with pre-application advice, such that its proportions are now considered acceptable. Although the roof design incorporates a barn-hip, rather than a full hip as found on the attached property, in this particular location I consider that to be acceptable. There would not be any loss of important space between buildings as this is a corner plot, nor would there be any significant loss of openness as the flank of the extended building would still be set in approximately 14m from the pavement and would not protrude forward of the front building line of the west-facing bungalows just around the corner. Furthermore, I noted during my site visit that a similar barn-hipped side extension had been permitted and constructed at No 37 Downs View Road (MA/09/0393); and that a number of properties had had their fully-hipped roofs converted to full gables, an alteration that can often be carried out as permitted development without the need for planning permission.
- 5.4.4 In summary, therefore, I do not consider that the proposal would cause any material harm to the character of the host dwelling or the character or appearance of the street-scene and surrounding area.

5.5 Residential Amenity

- 5.5.1 The application building is set both down from, and at right angles to, No 32 Downs View Road, (non-attached neighbour to south-west). In view of this location and orientation, I do not consider that the proposal would result in any significantly detrimental impact on the daylight, sunlight or outlook enjoyed by that property. Similarly, for these same reasons, and due to the angled nature of both rear gardens, plus the fact that the closest two of the three proposed rear-facing first-floor windows are shown on the drawings as obscure-glazed, I do not consider that there would be a significantly harmful increase in overlooking. (It is already possible to see into No 32's rear garden in any case through the trellis on the boundary fence, which is understood to be owned by No 32.)
- 5.5.2 The extension would be shielded from No 36 Downs View Road, (attached neighbour to east), by the application building, and the dormers would create a relatively small amount of additional bulk when viewed in side profile, such that I do not consider that there would be any significant impact on the daylight, sunlight or outlook enjoyed by that property. The first-floor rear window closest to the common boundary is the one shown as not being obscure-glazed. However, No 36 has a flat-roofed rear extension that would partially obstruct views into that property's garden, (which again is already currently clearly visible over the boundary fence), plus any views from the dormer would be at an oblique angle in any case, so on balance I do not consider that the impact of the proposal on the privacy of No 36 would be significantly harmful to justify a refusal of planning permission that could be sustained at appeal.

5.5.3 I note that no objections have been received from neighbours.

5.6 **Highway Safety/Parking**

5.6.1 Downs View Road is a cul-de-sac within a residential area (30 mph speed limit). Although the garage would be removed, sufficient space would remain within the property boundary to park one vehicle, and in this location I do not consider that parking on the road is likely to be prejudicial to highway safety. I also note that the extension does include a store, which would be capable of taking bicycles and thus providing a more sustainable means of transport. I therefore consider the highways impacts of the proposal to be acceptable.

5.7 **Trees**

5.7.1 As the development would not come beneath the canopy spread of any of the trees on the side boundary, and would take place on a hard-surfaced driveway/site of the garage, which is unlikely to contain any significant tree roots, the Landscape Officer has advised that it would be unlikely to compromise their health and is therefore acceptable. He has also advised that although the trees are not worthy of a TPO, they do contribute to the amenity of the street-scene and so a tree protection condition should be attached to any approval to prevent storage of materials and equipment beneath them.

5.8 **Ecology**

5.8.1 Neither the trees nor the false-pitched/flat-roofed garage appeared from my site visit to have any potential as a habitat for bats. The development area is a hard-surfaced driveway/site of the garage, and therefore is unlikely to provide valuable habitat for protected species. In these circumstances, I do not consider any ecological measures to be necessary.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1 Taking all of the above into account, I conclude that the proposal complies with Development Plan Policy, the aims of the Council's adopted residential extensions guidelines and Central Government Guidance, and that consequently the application should be approved with conditions as set out below.

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION 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;

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2005.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
31.126.1., 31.126.2.B & 31.126.3 received on 12/12/11;

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is maintained and to prevent harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policy H18 of the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building;

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policy H18 of the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000.

4. No work shall take place on site until full details of tree protection by barriers and/or ground protection in accordance with BS 5837 (2005) 'Trees in Relation to Construction - Recommendations', have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved barriers and/or ground protection shall be erected before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed, nor fires lit, within any of the areas protected in accordance with this condition. The siting of barriers/ground protection shall not be altered, nor ground levels changed, nor excavations made within these areas without the prior written consent of the local planning authority;

Reason: To safeguard existing trees, which are considered to contribute to the visual amenity of the street-scene, in accordance with Policy ENV6 of the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000.

The proposed development, subject to the conditions stated, is considered to comply with the policies of the Development Plan (Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000 and the South East Plan 2009) and there are no overriding material considerations to indicate a refusal of planning consent.