

Planning, Design and Access Statement.
Beech House, The Beeches, Sole Street, Cobham, DA13 9BT.

Introduction

The property is a modern two storey detached house which was built before 2011 as an infill development within a residential area mainly comprising similar two storey detached houses.

When planning approval was granted in 2006 planning conditions were appended to the grant of planning consent which removed Permitted Development rights.

The relevant wording being within Conditions 3 and 5. Condition 3 prevents any enlargement of the dwelling under permitted rights and Condition 5 prevents new window, door or other openings being formed in either flank elevation.

A planning application submitted in 2020 that sought to remove these Conditions was refused so any alterations to the property that fit within the works covered by the two Conditions therefore requires planning approval.

The Proposal

The proposed extensions comprise a single storey rear extension with a sloping roof back to the main rear wall of the house and a side extension set back from the front wall and also having a low pitched roof running back to the side wall.

The rear extension will provide a garden room extension across the back of the house with the current rear wall in the area of the lounge to be removed so the lounge extends into the garden room. Tri-folding doors will open the rooms out to the rear garden.

The side extension primarily creates a covered storage area and also a covered walkway. Whilst it's useable area is limited this area will provide space for a work bench, storage of bicycles and so on.

External materials, facing bricks and roof tiles are to match the main house.

Design

The design for the extensions is in keeping with the house and with the external materials. The roof slope has a low pitch to reduce the visual impact. There are existing 1.8 metre high close boarded fences and also a number of trees and shrubs to the rear garden which will screen the extension from the neighbouring houses. To the side of the houses there is an existing tall garden wall between the house and the neighbour to the right and then a fence behind the wall and the neighbouring house to the right side doesn't have any windows to the side so are not impacted in terms of visual intrusion by the side extension.

Enclosure of the side walkway will also be slightly beneficial to the adjoining owner by reducing the noise of people walking to the side of the house, not that this is really of much significance.

Planning.

We have touched on the reason why a planning application is necessary for extensions which would otherwise be permitted, if slightly revised.

The Pre-application response, reference number PRE20220150 dated 16th June 2022 outlined the relevant Planning Policies within National Planning Policies and also the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and saved policies from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 together with other Supplementary Planning Guidance including SPG2-Residential Layout Guidelines. SPG4-KCC Parking Standards. Nationally Described Space Standards and Landscape Character Assessment.

The Pre-app response raised a question regarding the room in the roof. This is used as a home office.

The proposed extensions are of low impact and from that aspect should therefore be acceptable. With regards to the garden area the house is a three bedroom house and therefore needs to have 60 sq metres of garden with the rear garden being 92 square metres so in excess of the required amount although it's depth from the rear wall of the proposed extension is 6.4 metres for the deepest part of the extension to rear fence and 7.6 metres where the tri-folding doors are located.

The Residential Layout guidance SPD2 provides the standards required for new houses and includes the following text:

Notwithstanding the above, greater depths/areas may be required where gardens incorporate steep gradients, preserved trees, or if there is garaging or parking at the rear. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for the minimum garden depths and areas referred to (above) to be modified. In these cases, each scheme will be considered on its individual merits, having particular regard to any exceptional circumstances and all other material considerations.

In this case the garden is of good width and the houses in this area are detached in large plots so there is no negative impact in terms of overall plot density or the character of the area because these extensions don't alter the generally spacious layout of the houses. The rear extension adds to the internal amenity space providing an area in the house mid-way between being a reception room and a garden room with a large opening door so the space can be used in conjunction with the use of the garden and so we suggest this room can be considered to be space that is part of the garden allowing for example the setting up of garden table and chairs in a period of poor weather. The use of the rear extension will fall between garden leisure use and habitable room.

Part of the area of the rear extension now proposed was granted planning approval under application 20140276 although wasn't constructed.

There is sufficient parking on the drive for a three bedroom house and also plenty of available space in the road for visitors.

The pre-app response mentions consider overlooking and not having any side windows. There is one small side window facing to the left side and looking towards the house that is to the west. However, along the left side boundary there is a close boarded fence as described above which creates an effective screen between the gardens.

Access

This part of Cobham is served by a mainline railway station at Sole Street with services to Victoria and Cannon Street. The railway station is within walking distance.

There is good access by car to the main towns close by such as Gravesend or Dartford. Gravesend is about 5 miles away.

Within Sole Street there is a local grocery shop and a pub with a restaurant. Similar facilities exist in Cobham where there is also a Primary School.

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