

A01

F/TH/20/1196

PROPOSAL: Erection of second and third floor extension to enlarge existing 2No. 2 bedroom self contained flats to 2No. 6 bedroom self contained maisonettes with creation of roof terrace, erection of front balconies, alterations to fenestration and addition of external spiral staircase to rear, following demolition of existing parapet and first floor balcony balustrade

LOCATION:

Flats 2 And 4 Sion Court 3 - 4 Sion Hill RAMSGATE Kent CT11 9JA

WARD: Central Harbour

AGENT: Mr Ivan del Renzio

APPLICANT: Mr Matthew Green

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

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.

GROUND:

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Purchase Act 2004).

2 The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted application as amended by the revised drawing numbered 396-PLN-200 Rev A received 4 November 2020.

GROUND;

To secure the proper development of the area.

3 The external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall be finished in accordance with the material schedule as annotated and illustrated on the approved plan numbered 396-PLN-200 Rev A received 4 November 2020.

GROUND;

To secure a satisfactory external treatment and to safeguard the special character and appearance of the area as a Conservation Area in accordance with Policies QD02 and HE02 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

4 Prior the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved samples of the proposed bricks (Brick A and Brick B) to be used shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved samples unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

GROUND;

To secure a satisfactory external treatment and to safeguard the special character and appearance of the area as a Conservation Area in accordance with Policies QD02 and HE02 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

5 Prior the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved details, including the manufacturers details of the proposed aluminium framed windows and doors shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

GROUND;

To secure a satisfactory external treatment and to safeguard the special character and appearance of the area as a Conservation Area in accordance with Policies QD02 and HE02 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Prior to the installation of the powder coated steel railings to the balconies hereby approved, details of their colour shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

GROUND;

To secure a satisfactory external treatment and to safeguard the special character and appearance of the area as a Conservation Area in accordance with Policies QD02 and HE02 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7 All new window and door openings shall be set within a reveal of not less than 100mm.

GROUND;

To secure a satisfactory external treatment and to safeguard the special character and appearance of the area as a Conservation Area in accordance with Policies QD02 and HE02 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

8 The roof terraces hereby approved shall be provided in accordance with the position and provision of glazed balustrading as illustrated and annotated on the approved plan numbered 396-PLN-200 Rev A received 4 November 2020, and thereafter maintained.

GROUND;

To secure a satisfactory external treatment in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the residential amenities of adjacent neighbouring properties in accordance with Policies HE02, QD02 and QD03 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

9 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, details of the proposed refuse and cycle store as shown on approved plan numbered 396-PLN-200 Rev A received 4 November 2020, including its detailed design, colour, finish and means of access, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The refuse and cycle store shall be provided in accordance with the approved details in the location shown on the approved plan prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be thereafter maintained for that purpose.

GROUND:

To provide an adequate standard of amenity for the future occupiers of the development and in the interest of promoting cycling in accordance with Policies QD03 and TP03 of the Thanet Local Plan and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Sion Court is a two storey mid terraced building which has a mirrored appearance of 2No. separate units, set within a terrace of four storey properties with basement levels. The application property is prominently located within the Ramsgate Conservation Area, overlooking Ramsgate Harbour and is highly visible from the surrounding area, predominantly at an elevated level.

The surrounding built environment predominantly comprises late Georgian and Victorian four storey terraced properties with basement levels overlooking Ramsgate Harbour, of varied designs but with common features, for example vertical proportions and orderly patterns of vertically proportioned fenestration.

The property is believed to be a bomb damage site, and was previously occupied by 2No. four storey terraced buildings with basement levels which reflected the appearance of the remaining regency terraces 1 and 5 Sion Hill. The existing building comprises an unassuming design and appearance to the ground floor, incorporating bay windows, with an enclosed balcony at first floor level set under a hipped pitched roof which creates a top heavy appearance to the building.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application relates to the top floor of Sion Court and proposes to reconfigure the front elevation at first floor level, together with the erection of an additional two storeys to enlarge the existing 2No. 2 bed self-contained flats to create 2No. 6 bed self-contained maisonettes across three floors.

The proposed second and third floor extension follows the built parameters of the existing property, aligning with the existing front and rear elevation. The building shall retain the existing mirrored appearance of 2No. separate units, and shall be set under a flat roof with a parapet to the front and rear. The design of the top three floors will provide a unified appearance, with vertically proportioned fenestration, front balconies to the first and second floor, and a roof terrace at roof level, served by glazed balustrading which shall be set in from the front and rear perimeters of the building.

To the rear, some alterations to fenestration are proposed at first floor level, together with the erection of a spiral staircase accessed from the existing rear balcony to provide access to the rear garden. The southern corner of the rear balcony will provide an enclosed cycle and refuse store. The rear of the additional two storeys will contain Juliet balconies to the central openings, and windows to the remainder.

The application has been amended during the course of the application. These alterations include the omission of the top floor balconies to the front elevation, the provision of refuse and cycle storage and the further set back of the rear balustrade to the roof terrace.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan 2020

SP01 - General Housing Policy
SP29 - Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM)
HO1 - Housing Development
HE02 - Development in Conservation Areas
GI04 - Amenity Space/Equipped Play
QD02 - General Design Principles
QD03 - Living Conditions
QD04 - Technical Standards
TP03 - Cycling
TP06 - Car Parking

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to neighbouring property occupiers and a site notice was posted near the site. 17 letters of objection have been received. 5 of these objections are the same letter with the same content. The letters of objection raise the following concerns:

- The development is not in keeping with the surrounding historic architectural building design.
- The development will have a negative visual impact on the Ramsgate seafront/Clifftop street scene.
- The development will be detrimental to nearby Listed Buildings.
- The proposal will be dominant.
- The proposed additional storeys will be overbearing and result in a loss of light.

- The development will result in the loss of morning sunlight to properties on Adelaide Gardens.
- The proposal will result in the loss of partial sea view.
- The proposed development will result in overlooking.
- The proposed development will result in a loss of privacy, particularly to the existing rear garden.
- The number of bedrooms proposed for the flats is excessive.
- The proposal will result in overdevelopment.
- The existing area is subject to parking pressure, and the proposed development will worsen this situation.
- The drawings show that the third floor plans could easily be hived off into self contained flats, with their own kitchen diner, bathroom, bedroom and the top stairwell is self contained.
- The proposal will have 6 bedrooms. Not many family homes have more than 4 bedrooms, unless they are a hotel or HMO.
- The existing building is constructed on the site of formerly bomb damaged houses that had basements. At the time of the rebuild as was common the buildings were built without foundations, straight onto the chalk fill. There are also underground tunnels in this area. Concerned that the additional floors will create structural issues for the existing building and surrounding properties.
- According to present day building regulations we do not believe that the foundations are suitable to adequately support the additional weight of a two storey extension.
- Currently rent out an existing flat in the building, and am concerned about the impact of the development on rental income.
- Own the freehold of the front and rear gardens and hallway, and do not give permission for extra properties using this thoroughfare or the erection of scaffolding etc. for building works.
- The development will result in a loss of property value.
- The building works for the proposal would mean significant and lengthy interference with the quiet enjoyment of existing properties.
- Dispute that notice was served to affected freeholders and leaseholders.

Ramsgate Town Council - Ramsgate Town Council will not object to this application as long as the appropriate materials are used in the conservation area and the design features conform to conservation area standards.

It has been brought to the Council's attention that the requisite notices were not correctly served, and that notice was not originally served on Flat 1 and Flat 3 Sion Court, and was only served on Flats 2 and 4. This has now been corrected and notice has now been served on Flats 1 and 3, with a minimum of 21 days provided for further comments to be received. An updated application form and evidence of the notice letters, proof of postage, and that the letters were signed for on 11th December 2020 has been submitted.

Following the serving of these notices, no further comments have been received from neighbouring residents.

CONSULTATIONS

TDC Conservation Officer - Thanets recently adopted Local Plan, policy HE02, states within Section 7 'The character, scale and plan form of the original building are respected and the development is subordinate to it and does not dominate principal elevations.' As well as Section 8 which states 'Appropriate materials and detailing are proposed and the development would not result in the loss of features that contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area. New development which would detract from the immediate or wider landscape setting of any part of a conservation area will not be permitted.'

Guidance under the National Design Guide Section C2, Paragraph 45 highlights that when determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape and paragraph 47 which states Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by the local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details.

Previously planning has been approved for this site, reference TH/07/0208, which was for the construction of two properties which were replacing smaller developments within the terrace. For whatever reason at the time only one of these two developments, which were matching in design, were constructed. This left the other site remaining as existing, shown in the 2007 application.

Although I can appreciate that this application was approved some time ago in 2007 the premise of the infill of the site was determined as acceptable which is something which still has to be taken into consideration when reviewing this application.

Initially there were some concerns regarding the design of the proposed development through the former pre-application scheme as it appeared somewhat squat and flat formed when compared to the much taller proportions in the neighbouring properties. After further discussions with the agent, drawings were resubmitted for review which reinstate a sense of vertical emphasis to the site. This has been achieved through the splitting of the site, to appear as two separate terraces, the use of taller proportion windows with slim aluminium frames and open balconies rather than an overhanging or enclosed balcony structure. There is also a sense of hierarchy proposed to the principle facade of the terrace, with the 'heaviest' layers appearing at ground level and then reducing in weight and form density as they rise upwards. Further reflected through the use of the largest or fullest balcony on the first floor with then a slightly smaller balcony moving upwards and then none at the top level. There are a large number of examples of balconies in this formation throughout Ramsgate and within the conservation area as well as similar layouts on neighbouring properties. The course line and proportions of the windows of the neighbouring properties have also been used as influence for the form of this building. Using existing characteristics from the surrounding environment in a symmetrically formed way is a positive attribute of this application, further assisting in its cohesion into the existing terrace.

Typically the installation of a roof terrace would be discouraged within the conservation environment. However, given that this terrace is largely stepped back from the parapet both to the front and the rear, reducing its visibility, I believe that the harm usually associated is reduced significantly.

The rear facade of the proposed scheme has been analysed as part of this application and due its orientation and enclosed nature of the site it is considered to have a reduced impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area.

The materials proposed throughout the scheme are considered to have a neutral effect on the surrounding conservation environment as they are largely reflective of those that are currently present, albeit in a largely improved form and layout.

Overall I believe the proposed scheme to be an improvement to the existing site, infilling the space as once was previously intended whilst using materials and design appropriate for the traditional environment. Splitting the site into two visual entities assists, in my option, the perceivable vertical emphasis to the site which also then further aids its cohesion into the existing character of the adjacent properties. I believe that this application has considered local and national guidance, as well as the historic integrity of the area and therefore I do not object to the proposed.

COMMENTS

This application has been called to Planning Committee by Councillor Albon to allow Members to consider the impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the residential amenities of adjacent neighbouring properties.

The main consideration with regard to this application is the principle of development, the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the impact upon residential amenity, and the impact upon highway safety.

Principle

Policy HO1 of the Thanet Local Plan permits new housing development on non-allocated sites within the confines of the urban area and villages, subject to meeting other relevant Local Plan policies, including General Housing Policy SP14. Within the Thanet Local Plan there is an allowance for 2,025 units of the required housing supply over the plan period to be provided through windfall sites, which usually consist of previously developed non-allocated sites. The scheme comprises the conversion and extension of the existing building within the urban confines to enlarge existing residential units and is therefore considered to comply with Policy HO1 of the Thanet Local Plan.

The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to the assessment of all other material planning considerations.

Character and Appearance

As the site is located within a Conservation Area the Local Planning Authority must have regard for Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

The existing building is unusual in its low height, sited within a row of predominantly four storey terraced buildings overlooking Ramsgate Harbour. The building contains an enclosed first floor balcony which spans the full width of the property, which is considered to form an incompatible, top heavy feature. The proposed development would involve the erection of additional storeys to accord with the common height of the terrace to which it forms a part, the removal of this enclosed balcony, and the redesign of this elevation, to form a cohesive appearance with the proposed additional storeys.

The design of the extended and altered building shall appear as two units, of slightly differing heights which references the original increased height of the original building to the north. The height, scale and proportions of the proposed building, which will align with the front and rear elevation of the existing building, of a comparable height to the terrace to which it forms a part, is considered to successfully incorporate into the built form of the existing terrace, relating to the vertical emphasis and proportions of the surrounding built environment. The proposal will reinstate the original four storey scale and height of the building above ground floor level, providing continuity and a characteristic sense of enclosure to this prominent terrace.

The design of the extended and altered building is considered to successfully relate and integrate with the design of the ground floor of the application property, and the common design features and proportions of the terrace to which it will form a part, whilst providing a modern, contemporary approach and appearance. The fenestration will reflect a traditional pattern of fenestration, and shall provide an appropriate hierarchy, with the heaviest levels at ground level, which reduce in weight as they rise upwards. This is further reflected through the proposed balconies to the principal elevation, with the largest balcony at first floor level, a reduced balcony at second floor level and none to the top floor. There are a number of balconies at these levels within the existing terrace, and as such these balconies are not considered to be out of character with this part of the Conservation Area.

The rear of the building shall provide a simpler, more modern design and appearance, which suitably references the design features of the locality. The proposed spiral staircase is considered to be a modest, lightweight addition, which will have limited prominence and is therefore not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The extended and altered building shall be finished in appropriate, compatible materials for its position within a Conservation Area, including two differing red stock bricks to the front elevation, which shall suitably integrate with brickwork to the ground floor level and aid the appearance of the building as two units, aluminium framed fenestration, cast stone headers and powder coated steel balustrading. A sample material condition shall be attached to the consent should the application be approved to ensure the materials are an appropriate quality and finish.

The proposal incorporates a glazed roof terrace, which will be meaningfully set in from the perimeter of the building by approximately 1.3m to the front elevation and 2m to the rear. Roof terraces are not an established feature of the locality, however the permitted development of the Foy Boat to the south of the terrace includes a roof terrace of a similar design and appearance. The glazed balustrading shall have a simple and lightweight design and appearance, and the set back of the balustrading from the perimeter of the building, coupled with the parapet walls shall reduce the prominence and visibility of this feature from the surrounding public realm. As such, the roof terrace is considered form a discreet addition, which is not considered to be unduly prominent or harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be a compatible form of development which will successfully integrate with the existing property and the terrace to which it forms a part, and shall reinstate the scale and height of the original buildings which formerly occupied this site, providing greater continuity to the terrace. The extended and altered building will appear as 2No. units of a cohesive design, which references the design features and proportions of the surrounding built environment, whilst providing a modern approach and appearance.

The development is considered to be an improvement upon the existing building, which will enhance its contribution to the Conservation Area in this prominent location. The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies HEO2 and QD02 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Living Conditions

The proposed development will extend an additional two storeys which align with the front and rear elevation of the existing property. There are no side elevation windows to either adjoined neighbour adjacent to the proposed development. The built form of the additional two storeys will align with the front elevation of the terrace, and the top floor of the adjoined neighbour to the north, and will be set in from the three storey rear elevation of this neighbour. The proposed development will extend a modest depth forward of the four storey rear elevation of the adjoined neighbour to the south. Given the position of the proposed extension and the relationship with the adjoined neighbours, the proposed additional storeys are not considered to result in unacceptable harm to their residential amenities by way of loss of light, outlook or the creation of a sense of enclosure.

The proposed additional two storeys will involve the built development of the existing gap in the terrace above the existing two storey property. To the rear of the application property are a row of modern two storey terraced properties which are oriented so their front elevation faces north west, and the side elevation of the end terraced unit faces the application property to the east, which does not appear to contain any openings, together with part of rear gardens of properties fronting Rose Hill. Four storeys is the established height of the application terrace, and the proposal will reinstate the former height of the original units.

The proposed additional storeys will result in some impacts to these adjacent properties and rear gardens, such as some loss of daylight. However, given the position and orientation of the adjacent row of dwellings, the siting of the adjacent gardens, which only partially abuts

the application site, and the established height and presence of the existing terrace, this is not considered to result in significant harm to the living conditions of adjacent neighbours to warrant refusal of the application.

In terms of overlooking, the proposed development will introduce second and third floor rear elevation windows. The application site is situated within a terrace of four storey buildings which include numerous windows to the rear elevation, and originally comprised 2No. Four storey buildings. Given the context of the application site and the established presence of rear elevation windows to all four storeys, it is not considered that the rear elevation windows to the proposed development would significantly increase the existing established level of overlooking, or result in significantly harmful overlooking.

The proposed roof terrace will incorporate approximately 1.2m high glazed balustrading. The position of the rear balustrading has been amended and further set back, and will now be sited 2m from the rear elevation. This set back of the balustrading will restrict possible views to the rear from the roof terrace, through the presence of the built form, which will prevent harmful overlooking.

In terms of the living conditions for future occupiers, the proposed enlarged units provide generous accommodation, which will exceed the applicable Nationally Described Space Standards. All primary habitable rooms shall be served by front or rear windows which will provide suitable light, outlook and ventilation.

Thanet Local Plan Policy GI04 expects doorstep play space which is immediately adjacent to, and easily accessible from the proposed site for units of accommodation with 2 or more bedrooms. The proposal is unable to provide external doorstep play space to the rear as this space is occupied by the rear gardens of the ground floor units which are not included within the application site.

The site is located within a high density urban environment and is a short distance to Ramsgate Beach and other amenity areas which provide recreational space. The proposal will include a large roof terrace to each enlarged unit, which, whilst not constituting doorstep play space, provides some amenity space to serve the enlarged units. Given the location and constraints of the application site, its proximity to recreational space, and the provision of roof terraces, it is not considered that the lack of doorstep play space would be considered unacceptable in this instance.

The proposed development includes an enclosed refuse and cycle store to part of the rear balcony, which is considered to provide suitable and sufficient relatively discreet provision which is accessible to both units, and provided with access to the rear gardens through the proposed spiral staircase.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of residential amenity of the adjacent neighbours and the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling in accordance with Policy QD03, QD04 and GI04 of the Thanet Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways

The proposal seeks to enlarge the existing residential units to 2No. 6 bed maisonettes and does not propose any off street parking.

The site is located in close proximity to Ramsgate Town Centre which provides a range of amenities, and is located in the vicinity of several bus stops which are served by a number of bus services. As such, the site is considered to be sustainably located. Restricted on street parking is available on Sion Hill and restricted and unrestricted on street parking is available in surrounding roads.

Whilst the proposal is likely to result in some additional demand for parking, given the sustainable location of the site and the nearby parking availability, it is not considered that the proposal will result in significant material harm to the local highway network or highway safety, in accordance with Policy TP06.

The development incorporates enclosed cycle storage provision to part of the first floor rear balcony, which is considered to provide adequate cycle storage to satisfy Policy TP03.

Contributions

Natural England has previously advised that the level of population increase predicted in Thanet should be considered likely to have a significant effect on the interest features for which the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR have been identified.

Thanet District Council produced the 'The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM)' to deal with these matters, which focuses on the impacts of recreational activities on the Thanet section of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). The studies indicate that recreational disturbance is a potential cause of the decline in bird numbers in the SPA. To enable the Council to be satisfied that proposed residential development will avoid a likely significant effect on the designated sites (due to an increase in recreation) a financial contribution is required for all housing developments to contribute to the district wide mitigation strategy. This mitigation has meant that the Council accords with the Habitat Regulations.

The proposal would increase the overall floor area and number of bedrooms of the existing residential units, but does not propose the creation of any additional residential units. As the amount of residential units on site is not altering, it is considered that the development would not result in material additional recreational pressure within the district and as such it is considered that an SPA contribution is not required in this instance.

Other Matters

Concern has been raised regarding the structural integrity of the existing building and the ability to construct the proposed development. This falls within the remit of Building Regulations.

Concerns have been raised relating to freehold ownership, access and permission to construct the proposed development. These are civil matters which fall outside of the planning system.

Concern has been raised regarding the loss of property value. The impact of a proposed development upon property value is not a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Concern has been raised regarding the loss of views. The loss of a view is not a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Conclusion

Overall the amended scheme is considered to be a compatible form of development within the Conservation Area, which has an acceptable impact upon the living conditions of adjacent neighbours, highway safety and amenity, and provides a satisfactory standard of amenity for future occupiers. The proposed amended development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the relevant Thanet Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is therefore recommended that members approve this application, subject to safeguarding conditions.

Case Officer

Jenny Suttle

TITLE:

F/TH/20/1196

Project

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