

**A04**

**FH/TH/24/0653**

PROPOSAL: Installation of decking to rear and erection of bike shed  
(retrospective application)

LOCATION: 31 Dane Crescent Ramsgate Kent CT11 7JU

WARD: Eastcliff

AGENT: No agent

APPLICANT: Mr Daniel Stewart

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted drawings numbered 07, received 12 July 2024.

**GROUND;**

To secure the proper development of the area.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The property is a two storey dwelling located in Dane Crescent which comprises predominantly two storey dwellings set back from the highway with small front gardens. The property forms a semi-detached pair with No 33.

PLANNING HISTORY

FH/TH/16/0182 GTD 15 April 2016  
Erection of single storey rear extension following demolition of existing outbuilding

FH/TH/16/1038 GTD 22 September 2016  
Retrospective application for erection of single storey rear extension following demolition of existing

FH/TH/24/0650 - Erection of dormer to rear elevation together with 2No rooflights to front elevation and installation of cladding to rear dormer (retrospective application) - decision pending

FH/TH/24/0652 - Erection of 2.7 metre and 2.45 metre high slated fence with 2.2m high close boarded fence to east boundary and 2.4 metre high close boarded fence to west boundary (retrospective application) - decision pending

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Decking has been installed within the rear garden along with a bike shed. The raised decking extends across the width of the gardens and covers the top half of the garden, extending approximately 6 metres from the lowest step from the rear extension. There are 2 steps down from the decked area to the lower part of the garden where there is a small timber store annotated as a bike shed located between the upper and lower garden areas, set within the timber retaining wall.

## PLANNING POLICIES

### **Thanet Local Plan 2020**

SP35 - Quality Developments

QD02 - General Design Principles

QD03 - Living Conditions

## NOTIFICATIONS

Neighbours have been notified and a site notice posted and no representations have been received.

## COMMENTS

This application is reported to the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Crittenden to enable Members to consider the lack of construction detail and whether the decking and artificial grass effectively allows water to soak away.

The main considerations in assessing the application are the impact on the character and appearance of the area and impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers.

This application relates to the raised decking and bike store only.

Class E1(h) of Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, allows for the construction or provision of a verandah, balcony or raised platform that has a height of no more than 0.3 metres. In this instance the change in land levels has resulted in part of the decking exceeding the permitted height and therefore planning permission is required.

The timber storage shed, annotated as a bike store, is 2 metre wide by 1.6 metres deep and approximately 1.5 high. Class E1(b) and (e) permits buildings incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse provided (b) the buildings, enclosures and containers do not exceed 50% of the total area of the curtilage (excluding the ground area of the dwellinghouse) and (e) the height of the building, enclosure or container does not exceed 2.5 metres within 2 metres of the boundary. The storage shed has been included on the Garden Plan drawing however it meets the requirements of Class E and does not require the benefit of planning permission.

## **Character and Appearance**

Thanet Local Plan Policy QD02 requires new development to be well designed, respect and enhance the character of the area paying particular attention to context and identity of its location, scale, massing, rhythm, density, layout and use of materials appropriate to the locality. The development itself must be compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces. This policy is further supported by paragraph 135 of the NPPF which states that decisions should ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment.

In 2016 planning permission was granted for a single storey rear extension with steps leading from patio doors into the garden to take account of the significant drop in land levels from front to rear (north to south). The property has a 19 metre deep garden from the base of the steps to the rear boundary alongside which is an outbuilding with canopy roof. The land levels across the site change significantly from north to south, and from east to west, and the garden has been landscaped to provide an upper and lower level of garden. The area nearest to the house was previously covered with artificial grass and the lower section covered with decking. Due to the exceptional drop in land levels, (north to south and east to west) there is very little of the garden that would be a level surface. In order to make the space beyond the steps of the extension available for play space and general use, the raised decking has been relocated to the top half of the garden and the artificial grass at the furthest end. The raised decking extends approximately 6 metres from the lowest step where it commences flush with the level of the natural ground level. Due to the drop in land levels the height of the decking above natural ground level increases. Approximately halfway along the garden (9 metres from the rear elevation of the extension) the end of the raised decking finishes approximately 0.45 metres above the natural ground level. A retaining wall of timber has been installed to provide a low level wall across the end of the upper garden with steps providing access down to the lower part of the garden. A bike shed is located on the lower garden and set into the raised decking. The shed provides a partial barrier between the upper and lower garden areas.

At the far end of the garden (at its lowest point) there is an outbuilding. Through the gap between the side of the outbuilding and the fence the natural ground level can be seen and measured. At this point the level of the artificial grassed area is no greater than 0.3 metres above the natural ground level. The drawing has been annotated to show the artificial grass is approximately 0.320 metres above the natural ground level, and given the garden gradually slopes upwards towards the rear elevation of the dwelling these measurements are considered to be reasonably accurate.

Views of the decking, artificial grass and bike shed from the public realm would be limited due to the screening effect of surrounding development. Whilst the garden area may be visible from surrounding gardens the landscaping and shed have limited impact on the character and appearance of the wider area and the application therefore accords with the requirements of policy QD02 and the NPPF.

## **Living Conditions**

Nearby neighbouring dwellings on the southern side of Dane Crescent benefit from long rear gardens of more than 20 metres. The overall distance between the rear of the dwelling to the rear of properties fronting St Luke's Road is over 40 metres. The gardens to the rear of the application site, and neighbouring gardens, are on a significantly higher land level to the properties fronting St Luke's Road to the south. It is likely that there is some mutual overlooking between gardens due to this difference in land levels however in relation to the application site the outbuilding at the far end of the garden screens views beyond the rear boundary where there is substantial vegetation.

The landscaping of the garden separates the garden into an upper and lower level space and the raised decking has potential to increase overlooking between gardens. The steps immediately beyond the extension were approved through the 2016 consent, and standing on the decking at the base of the steps it is not possible to look directly into neighbouring gardens as there is high level boundary fencing on both side boundaries, with trees/shrubs growing above the height of the fence on the boundary with No 29 which restricts views into that property.

The fences erected on the common boundaries of adjoining neighbours are the subject of a separate planning application (planning reference FH/TH/24/0652). Notwithstanding consideration of the application for retention of the fence it is noted that the raised decking is 0.45 metres above the natural ground level at its highest point and that this is due to the land level dropping away. The decking is therefore 0.15 metres higher than the level allowed through permitted development at its highest point. Laying decking parallel to ground level, or maintaining a height of less than 0.3 metres would not provide a level surface and would be extremely difficult to achieve throughout the length of the garden. It is considered that the additional height afforded by the decking is unlikely to be significantly different in terms of potential for overlooking or loss of privacy between gardens than that allowed through raised decking at the permitted development height of 0.3 metres. In this instance the layout of the garden incorporates steps that lowers the height of anyone using the space and reduces the potential for unacceptable overlooking between gardens.

Given the above it is considered the proposed development would be compatible with neighbouring dwellings and not lead to unacceptable living conditions through overlooking or loss of privacy, meeting the requirements of Thanet Local Plan Policy QD03 and the NPPF.

### **Other Matters**

Concern has been raised that the surfacing of the whole garden with decking and artificial grass prevents surface water running off into the ground. There are limited opportunities within the site to see the natural ground level however at the far end of the garden between the outbuilding and the boundary wall the ground is not covered and a layer of stones can be seen. The applicant has advised that the surface water drains through the layers and directly into the ground beneath. Observations of the clean condition of the decking and artificial grass, at the time of my visit, supports the likelihood that there is adequate drainage across the surface area of the garden, to allow water to drain away satisfactorily into the ground.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development is considered to have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area and there is no significant harm to the living conditions of surrounding neighbouring residential occupiers. The proposed development therefore accords with Policies SP35, QD02 and QD03 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is therefore recommended that Members approve the application.

**Case Officer**

Rosemary Bullivant

TITLE:

FH/TH/24/0653

Project

31 Dane Crescent Ramsgate Kent CT11 7JU

