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| <b>2.3 REFERENCE NO - 22/500111/FULL</b>                                                                                                                                                       |                                        |                                                                           |
| <b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b><br>Erection of part single, part two storey side extension, conversion of loft into habitable space with front and rear dormers and hip to gable roof alterations. |                                        |                                                                           |
| <b>ADDRESS</b> 137 Sterling Road Tunstall Sittingbourne Kent ME10 1ST                                                                                                                          |                                        |                                                                           |
| <b>RECOMMENDATION</b> – Grant subject to conditions                                                                                                                                            |                                        |                                                                           |
| <b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE</b><br>Parish Council objection                                                                                                                            |                                        |                                                                           |
| <b>WARD</b> Woodstock                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b><br>Tunstall | <b>APPLICANT</b> Miss Sharon Wraight<br><b>AGENT</b> Woodstock Associates |
| <b>DECISION DUE DATE</b><br>10/03/22                                                                                                                                                           |                                        | <b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b><br>07/02/22                                  |

**Planning History**

None

**1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

1.1 137 Sterling Road is a two bedroom semi-detached chalet bungalow with a single detached garage, and driveway providing tandem parking for two cars. The property is located within the Local Plan defined built up area boundary of Sittingbourne/Tunstall and is located on a wide corner plot. Currently, it has flat roofed dormer windows to the front (bedroom) side (landing) and rear (bathroom). To the rear is a good sized but tapering garden.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a large side extension, with new front and rear dormers and a new rooflight at the rear. The overall roof height of the property will be maintained, but significant internal and external changes are proposed. The scheme has been amended at my suggestion to overcome loss of privacy issues to a neighbour which is set at a right angle at the rear of the application property; and it is in this amended form that the report assesses the application.

2.2 The proposed two storey side extension in conjunction with internal alterations will create a four bedroom bungalow, with one of the bedrooms on the ground floor. At ground floor level the existing forward wing will be replicated, as has occurred elsewhere on this estate. The first floor will include two extra bedrooms and a shower room. Privacy to the neighbour at the rear will be safeguarded by the removal of an originally proposed rear dormer in the new extension and its replacement with a roof light in the rear roof slope with a cill height of 1.7m above internal floor level.

2.3 Facing materials will match the existing, and the applicant has clarified the existence of three parking spaces on the plot.

### 3. PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

3.1 None

### 4.0 POLICY AND CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 policies:

ST3 (The Swale settlement strategy)

CP4 (Design)

DM14 (General development criteria)

DM16 (Alterations and extensions)

4.2 The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders will also be a relevant consideration. Paragraph 5.0 of the SPG states:

*Where a two storey side extension to a house is proposed in an area of mainly detached or semi detached housing, the Council is anxious to see that the area should not become 'terraced' in character, losing the sense of openness. Residents of such a street have the right to expect that the character should be retained. Houses should not be physically linked, especially at first floor level as the space between buildings is important in preserving the areas character and sense of openness. A gap of 2m between first floor extension and the side boundary is normally required.*

Paragraph 5.5 states:

*Dormers should be in proportion with the roof and only as large as necessary to allow light into the roof space. As a guide the dormer should be no deeper than half the depth of the roof slope and have square proportions or a vertical emphasis. They should normally have pitched roofs with tiles to match the main roof.*

Paragraphs 6.0 and 6.1 provide the following advice:

*Side windows should be avoided to reduce overlooking and mutual loss of privacy, although high level windows (with an internal sill height of at least 1.65m) may be acceptable. Obscured glazing to the toilet, bathroom and landing windows would overcome the problem. Windows to other ground floor rooms may be accepted if at least 2.4m from the side boundary and a screen fence or wall may be required to protect neighbour's privacy.*

*Windows to the rear should be at least 21m from the windows of other houses to the rear. Extensions which reduce such a distance will need to be carefully examined. It should be noted that the option of a high level window or high level rooflight as the only light and ventilation to a habitable room to overcome these problems is not normally accepted by the Council.*

## 5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Four letters of objection from neighbours in Sterling Road were received when the application was first submitted, raising the following summarised concerns:

- Overshadowing and obstruction of streetlighting to neighbours' garage and parking area
- Overbearing and imposing extension almost doubling the size of the property, and bringing it closer to the road at the front
- Any extension should be set back and/or in side and rear garden area
- Loss of views and of sky
- Loss of natural daylight/sunlight and consequent affect on neighbours' heating bills
- Loss of privacy from new rear dormer window

NOTE: This dormer has now been deleted from the scheme

- Unappealing appearance out of character with other homes in the area, especially the wider front elevation and vertical side wall with chimney and vent pipes
- Noise and disruption during construction
- Parking and traffic disruption during construction
- Parking provision – the road is narrow and parking can be awkward at times
- New chimney is not a good idea, it will allow smoke and smells to enter open windows to the detriment of those with health issues. It may end up higher than is shown
- Single storey side extension suggested alternative by one neighbour
- Errors on application form, regarding whether the property can be seen from a public road
- Errors in drawings

NOTE: These were either misunderstandings or have now been corrected

- Party wall issues
- How long will the work take to be completed?

5.2 As the changes to the application have only reduced the likely impact of the works, resolved ambiguities in the drawings and clarified parking provision I have not re-notified neighbours; but some of the above points are no longer up to date.

## 6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Tunstall Parish Council has commented *“that councillors concerns regarding the scale and mass of the extension in this corner position and its impact on the street scene. The parish council asks that neighbours comments are taken into consideration”*.

## 7.0 APPRAISAL

7.1 The site is situated within the Local Plan defined built-up area boundary of Sittingbourne/Tunstall and as such the principle of the development is acceptable subject to the other relevant policy considerations outlined below. The main issues to consider in this case are those of the impact on the streetscene and any impact on the residential amenities of neighbours.

- 7.2 The area is characterised by semi-detached chalet bungalows, many of which have been altered or extended in various styles. This particular alteration continues the original form of the property and removes several flat roofed dormer windows. To that extent I see no harm arising to the overall character of the area. In fact, this design is far better than many past alterations locally.
- 7.3 Paragraph 5.0 of the Council's SPG entitled 'Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders' states that '*Where a two storey side extension to a house is proposed in an area of mainly detached or semi detached housing, the Council is anxious to see that the area should not become terraced in character, losing the sense of openness.*' It goes on further to say '*A gap of 2m between a first floor extension and the side boundary is normally required.*' In this instance the property is on a wide corner plot so the 2m guidance is met, and there will remain a strong sense of openness between properties. I note that the extension will affect views from properties opposite, but these are of the sky, and cannot be safeguarded by the planning system.
- 7.4 I therefore focus on the possible impacts on neighbours' amenities. I see no concerns over overshadowing from the scale of the extension in view of the spacious nature of the plot and the distances to neighbours. There will be a significant change to the appearance of the property, but not one that I believe that the Council could refuse planning permission because of. However, the originally proposed new rear dormer window nearest to No. 135 would have provided an elevated view onto the patio area at the rear of No. 135. I therefore sought the deletion of this dormer, and now a high level rooflight is shown to provide secondary light to the rear of the new bedroom, overcoming this issue.
- 7.5 The property will enjoy adequate parking provision, and disruption during construction is not something that can be avoided. I see no objection in respect of these matters.
- 7.6 I note the comments made by the Parish Council but I believe the proposed development is of a modest scale in accordance with policy DM16, and that it would not be detrimental to the character of the immediate streetscene. There would be no significant sense of over dominance, or any unacceptable loss of outlook or overshadowing created as a result of this application to any of the properties in Sterling Road.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Having taken all the above into account, I consider the proposal to be well designed and of an appropriate scale, and I do not consider that it would have any significant impact on the surrounding neighbours.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION - Approve subject to the following conditions:**

### **CONDITIONS**

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with approved drawings WR/21/165.03A, WR/21/165.04A and WR/21/165.05A.

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

- (3) The facing bricks and roofing materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the proposed works hereby permitted shall match those on the existing building in terms of type, colour and texture.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and proper planning.

- (4) The rooflight in the new first floor bedroom shall have a cill height not less than 1.7m above finished internal floor level in that room.

Reason: To safeguard the privacy of neighbours.

### **The Council's approach to the application**

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

