

28 September 2023

Sevenoaks District Council
Council Offices
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 1HG

FAO – Stephanie Payne

Dear Stephanie,

7 Valle Gardens, Leigh, Kent, TN11 9FB

I am writing in relation to the recent planning application (23/02604/HOUSE) which has been submitted in relation to 7 Valle Gardens. We have a number of concerns in relation to this planning application which I have set out in further detail below.

Parking

The existing residential dwelling comprises kitchen, W.C and lounge at ground floor level with three bedrooms, bathroom and shower room at first floor level. The current parking provisions comprise a car port and 2 tandem spaces directly in front of the car port, this allows parking for three vehicles albeit these are not individually accessible spaces.

The proposed two storey extension would create a significantly larger residential dwelling with kitchen, W.C, lounge and snug at ground floor level with five bedrooms, two bathrooms and shower room at first floor level. The parking provisions would also be significantly altered removing the car port and replacing it with the snug, a garage would be erected on one of the parking spaces with one space remaining.

A review of the Kent Design Guide – Parking standards sets out on Page 20. and shown below in **Table 1** that a 4+ bedroom house is required to have 3 spaces per unit in a rural location. I refer to the planning officers Delegated Report dated 03/06/14 reference SE/ 14/00487 which relates to the original application to develop the Old Powder Mills site. Within the report the Hildenborough Parish Council refer to the site as being located within a rural location, an extract is shown in **image 1**.

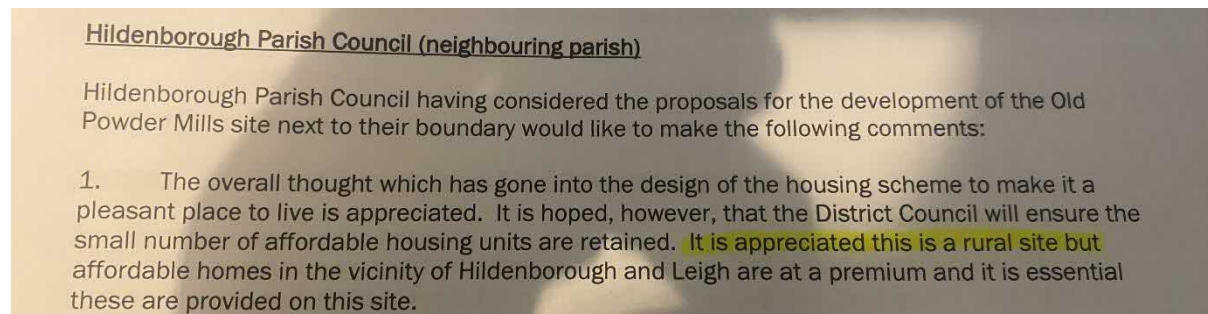


Image 1

The KCC parking standards goes on to state (Page 5) that garages are unlikely to be used for the parking of a vehicle unless there are no alternative parking options available in the locality. As such, in suburban and rural locations, the Local Highway Authority will not count garages as formal car parking spaces. Furthermore, parking spaces in front of garages should provide space for the full length of the vehicle plus an allowance for opening of a garage door where applicable 6.0m should be provided in front of garages. The proposed site layout would only allow for a 5m parking space between the garage and Valle Gardens which would not be sufficient for a large family car that would no doubt be required for a five bedroom dwelling.

Table 1: Residential Car Parking Standards

	City / Town Centre ¹	Edge of Centre ¹	Suburban	Rural
1 & 2 Bed Flats	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit
1 & 2 Bed Houses	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit*	2 spaces per unit
3 Bed Houses	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	2 spaces per unit	2 spaces per unit
4+ Bed Houses	1 space per unit	2 spaces per unit	2 spaces per unit*	3 spaces per unit
Visitor Parking	None	0.2 per unit	0.2 per unit	0.2 per unit

The lack of adequate parking would then require the residents to park in the visitor parking bays directly opposite. These parking spaces are currently in frequent use by visitors to both Burton Avenue and Valle Gardens and the loss of visitor spaces would inevitably lead to a rise in on road parking along Burton Avenue. **Photograph 1** below shows the impact of both visitor spots opposite 7 Valle Gardens been occupied and a car been parked on the road outside of 7 Valle Gardens hindering access to the neighbouring properties.

As part of planning application SE/14/00487 concerns were raised by Kent Highways as to the bendy nature of the spine road (Burton Avenue) and the difficulties that this may create in terms of larger vehicles (Bus, Emergency Vehicles, refuse lorries) accessing the site. As shown in **Image 2** the layout of the development whilst meeting the overall number of parking places required by IGN3 some of the three-bedroom properties including 7 Valle Gardens have tandem parking spaces rather than independently accessible provisions and this is likely to result in some on-street parking.



Photograph 1

At present there is already some on road parking taking place on Burton Avenue and this is heightened during periods of construction (See **Photograph 2**) works being undertaken on various properties. The on road parking already causes issues to larger vehicles passing and the reduction of parking at 7 Valle Gardens will only exacerbate this issue. Additional parking either on roads or on pavements also raises very serious safety concerns as it could hinder pedestrians using the pavement and obscure driver visibility. There are a large amount of family houses on the development with children regularly playing on both Burton Avenue and Valle Gardens.



Photograph 2

157.

The application proposes an overall number of parking places that appears to meet the total required by IGN3. However, some of the individual properties do not meet IGN3 standards, so for example two bed-room properties have only one parking space each with nowhere to park a second car except "visitor" parking spaces and these are not close at hand in every case. Some of the **three bedroom properties have tandem parking places** rather than the independently-accessible provision required by IGN3. **These issues are likely to result in some on-street parking.**

It should be noted that the Design and Access Statement gives the total parking provision as

Image 2

Design

The proposed extension to 7 Valle Gardens would see the existing dwelling 142m² (including car port) expand significantly to 181.6m² (including garage) an increase in the floor area of 27.8%. A review of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) sets out Policies EN1 & EN2. The criteria in EN1 (a) is that a proposed development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area. The 27.8% increase in floor area would add significant bulk to the dwelling and would be overbearing to neighbouring properties in particular 23 Burton Avenue. The extension of the property would bring the dwelling 3m closer to the dwelling at 23 Burton Avenue eroding the visual gap between the two dwellings and causing a disruption to the spatial pattern of development on the street which was carefully considered when the site was first planned. The distance between the edge of the proposed dwelling and the boundary of 23 Burton Avenue is approx. 1.5m.

Policy EN2 - Amenity Protection Proposals will be permitted where they would provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development and would safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties by ensuring that development does not result in, and is not located in areas where occupiers of the development would be subject to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicle movements, overlooking or visual intrusion and where the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.

Policy EN2 as set out above clearly states that poorly designed house extensions can have direct impacts on neighbouring occupiers. The position of the garden and windows at 23 Burton Avenue mean that the extension of 7 Valle Gardens would have an overbearing impact upon the neighbouring property. It is clear that this extension has not been designed sympathetically and would lead to a loss of the existing amenity and visual intrusion on adjoining properties.

Since the development at Powder Mills was completed, there have been a small number of acceptable planning applications submitted to extend existing properties. These have mainly consisted of loft conversions, garage conversions or single storey conversions. However, allowing two storey conversions sets a dangerous planning precedent and would no doubt encourage similar applications.

Based on the pertinent points set out within this correspondence I would urge the case officer to refuse the planning application and for the applicant to consider a reduced scheme more in keeping with the surroundings.

Yours sincerely

