

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2016

by Ray Wright BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 04 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/16/3155705
60 Plaxtol Road, Erith, Bexley DA8 1NL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Daniel Uzoma against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 16/00041/FUL was refused by notice dated 6 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is 'construction of a front dormer....'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of a front dormer window at 60 Plaxtol Road, Bexley, Kent DA8 1NL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/00041/FUL, dated 2 January 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development, hereby permitted, shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development, hereby permitted, shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 5300 – 04, 10A and 11A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development, hereby permitted, shall match those used in the existing building.

Main issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a two storey semi-detached dwelling which appears to have previously been extended by way of a two storey side extension, a single storey rear extension and a dormer window in the rear roof slope. As part of this scheme the existing rear dormer would be increased in size. The Council do not appear to address this in their assessment of the appeal application. The change proposed would be minimal adding a sloping side addition to the existing rectangular box dormer. The alteration would have very limited impact on the overall appearance of the property or on adjoining occupiers and as such I find this change acceptable. Consequently, the main area of contention in the appeal is the proposed installation of a front dormer window.
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4. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) indicates that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Framework, however, together with Saved Policies ENV39, and H9 of the 'Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan' 2004 (UDP), and Policies CS01 and CS04 of the Bexley Core Strategy 2012 (CS) require a high standard of design, which protects the existing character of areas.
5. The area within the vicinity of the appeal site has a mix of properties including bungalows, but predominately consists of two storey semi-detached dwellings. However, there is no generally consistent, or uniform design. Nearby houses include gable and bay fronted properties of different styles, together with dwellings with less detailed elevations, as in this appeal. Some of the buildings have prominent hipped or gable roof elements above their bays.
6. A number of dwellings in the area appear to have had loft conversions which include rear dormer windows, with roof light windows on front roof slopes. The proposed dormer would replace an existing roof light window. It would have a hipped, pitched roof set just below the ridge line of the main roof and would be set up from the eaves line. The glazing would be smaller, but generally align with the first floor windows below.
7. The Council's 'Design and Development Control Guidelines' (DDCG) indicates that 'roof extensions should, if possible have dormer windows facing to the rear.' This scheme would be on the road frontage and I saw no examples of similar front dormer windows within the immediate area. However, it would appear to meet all the detailed requirements set out in this guidance, in terms of size, form and location within the roof. Due to its position and small scale, it would retain some symmetry and be subordinate within the overall roof space.
8. Although the dormer would be a new element in this part of the streetscape the appeal dwelling lacks some of the detail present in other houses in the road. In these circumstances, due to its form and design, the proposed dormer would not detract from the overall appearance of this particular property or unduly imbalance the pair of dwellings of which it forms a part. As such, it would not be an overly dominant or prominent feature in the road and would not be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the area. I, therefore, find no conflict with the Framework, Policies CS01 or CS04 of the CS, Policies ENV 39 or H9 of the UDP or DDCG.

Conditions

9. The Council put forward two conditions should the appeal succeed. In my view the standard commencement condition is required, as is a condition referring to the relevant plans, in the interests of certainty. To fully integrate the dormer within the existing roof, it is important that suitable matching external finishes are used. Therefore, a condition requiring proposed external materials to match the existing is reasonable and necessary.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Ray Wright

INSPECTOR