
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2016

by G J Fort BA PGDip LLM MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/16/3156703
18 Hilldown Road, Hayes, Bromley, BR2 7HX

- 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 Mrs Irina Kennerley against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/16/02431/FULL6, dated 12 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor rear extension and roof alterations incorporating a pitched roof above existing side dormer and rear dormer window to create habitable accommodation, and elevational alterations to the front and side to incorporate this second submission including removal of first floor side dormer and rebuild as first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of its host dwelling and the streetscene.

Reasons

3. Situated in a principally residential area which comprises, in the main, semi-detached properties set back from the road behind modest front gardens, the appeal dwelling is of two-storeys faced in brick, tile and pebble-dashed render. The appeal dwelling is one of a pair of semi-detached houses, with a strongly symmetrical façade accentuated by the orientation of the hipped roof with the central chimney stack and the characteristic catslide roofs over recessed side elements, with circular windows, and gable springers within these side elements emphasising the architectural balance. The appeal property's roofline has been altered to a substantial degree, however, by a large tile-hung dormer extension over the catslide roof, the flat roof of which is slightly above the eaves level of the existing house. Along Hilldown Road, whilst the style of dwelling varies, the pairs of semi-detached properties with catslide roofs add a sense of rhythm and coherence to the streetscene.
 4. The proposed development would remodel the side element of the property resulting in the removal of the catslide roof and dormer to facilitate the development of a first floor with a more conventional hipped roof over this, which at the front would include a rooflight. The eaves and ridge height of this
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hipped roof would be more or less the same as that of the main roof of the appeal dwelling. At the rear, a second storey element would be added to the existing ground floor projection, and a dormer on the rear roof slope.

5. The appeal property benefits from extant planning permission¹, (the approved scheme) for alterations to the existing dormer, which would develop a hipped roof over it. Whilst the roof in the approved scheme would be of a similar height to that of the appeal proposal, it would be stepped back from the catslide roof. The elevation under the catslide roof would also be unaltered by the approved scheme. To the rear, the changes envisaged in the approved scheme are broadly similar to that of the appeal proposal.
6. I note that at the roof level the symmetry of the appeal dwelling and its attached neighbour is undermined to some extent by the existing side dormer. However, the appeal dwelling's catslide roof, and the characteristic elevational arrangement including the circular window and the tile gable springer, taken together, all add to the balance, symmetry and character of this pair of dwellings, and soften the effect of the current side dormer. In other examples I saw along Hilldown Road in similar properties with alterations to the side of their roofs, these characteristic elements remained, which added consistency and rhythm to the streetscene. Whilst the appellant considers that the approved scheme would have an over-engineered appearance, it would also retain the line of the catslide roof and its characteristic elevational features.
7. Unlike the approved scheme, the proposed development would utterly remove these characteristic elevational features and the line of the catslide roof, and consequently, interfere with the balance of the pair of semi-detached properties, to the detriment of their character and that of the streetscene. The proposed development's interference with the balance and composition of the façade would also undermine its architectural character to a significant degree to the detriment of the appearance of its host dwelling. The harmful effects in these regards would be exacerbated by the lack of subservience of the changes at the roof level, which would have no setback from the host dwelling's building lines, and appear as a dominant and bulky addition in stark contrast to the detailing and scale of its attached neighbour.
8. Thus the imbalance that would result from the proposed development would cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the streetscene. Moreover, the proposed development would clearly be more materially harmful than the approved scheme in this regard.
9. I note that on Chatsworth Road, properties have undergone similar alterations to those proposed in the appeal scheme. However, those properties are not immediately inter-visible with the appeal dwelling, and thus do not provide a context for the proposed development. Moreover, I saw in the bulk of other alterations to properties with similar designs to that of the appeal dwelling along Chatsworth Road, that the line of the catslide roof and other characteristic elevational features were retained. In any event, each proposal has to be considered on its own planning merits and the presence of extended buildings on Chatsworth Road does not weigh in favour of the proposed development to any great degree.

¹ LPA reference 15/01673/FULL6

10. My attention had been drawn to changes to 9 Hilldown Road. However, whilst that property is inter-visible with the appeal dwelling, it is of such a different character that it does not provide a precedent for the proposed development that is before me in this appeal, and thus I only attach limited weight to its consented alterations in the overall planning balance.
11. Whilst the materials palette proposed would not in itself be unsympathetic to the appeal dwelling and its attached neighbour, it would do little to soften the harmful effects that I have described. I concur with the appellant that the proposed alterations to the rear, which are broadly similar to those mooted in the approved scheme would thus be acceptable in planning terms. However, as the harmful aspects of the proposal reside principally in its impacts to the front elevation, and the streetscene, the lack of harm to the rear would not weigh heavily in its favour.
12. I note that the appellant's structural engineering advice suggests that the approved scheme may be complicated to build and require additional structural steelwork. This may be the case, however, this matter does not outweigh the harmful effects that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of the host property and wider area.
13. I note that there have been no objections to the proposed development, that its effects on the amenity of the occupants of adjacent dwellings are likely to be acceptable, and that the increased space will improve the amenity of the appeal dwelling's occupiers. However, these matters, taken individually or cumulatively would not outweigh the proposed development's harmful effects.
14. The environmental harm that the proposed development would cause by virtue of its effects to the character and appearance of the area would also demonstrably outweigh the modest social and economic benefits that would accrue from a development of this size. Thus the proposed development would not comprise sustainable development for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework, and as a consequence, would be contrary to its policies.
15. For these reasons also, the proposed development would conflict with Policies H8 and BE1 of the Bromley Unitary Development Plan (adopted July 2006). Taken together, and amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that alterations to existing dwellings respect or complement the scale and form of their host buildings, and are compatible with development in the surrounding area.
16. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR