

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2016

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/16/3160874

60 Manor Way, Beckenham BR3 3LJ

- 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 and Mrs O'Brien against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/16/02382/FULL6, dated 17 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of an existing garage and the construction of front, rear & side extensions, re-forming of roof with dormer windows to provide second floor accommodation and fenestration changes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. It is considered that the main issue whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Manor Way, Beckenham Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a large 2-storey detached dwelling with a detached single storey garage and is situated on a large plot within the Manor Way, Beckenham Conservation Area. There is a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and this duty is echoed in Policy BE11 of the London Borough of Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Policy 7.8 of The London Plan (LP).
 4. The Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Manor Way, Beckenham Conservation Area (SPG) refers to the character and appearance of the area being comprised of individual detached houses with common references to neo vernacular design and materials. The dwellings are generally 2-storey and set back from the edge of the footways to the rear of front gardens which are landscaped and used for parking. Some of the dwellings have been extended but the streetscene maintains a spacious and verdant character and appearance.
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5. The Arts and Crafts style of the property, including its front gable, fenestration and proportions, makes a positive contribution to the streetscene and the Conservation Area as a whole. I also share the Council's assessment that the pair of projecting gables to the rear of the property are features associated with the style of property and are similar to other gables observed during the site visit.
6. Planning permission was previously granted for alterations to the appeal property which included a single storey rear addition and the replacement of the detached garage by a single storey extension with an integral garage (Ref 13/03673/FULL6). From the street, the existing 2-storey element of the property would have been unaltered and remained the dominant feature and the property's appearance from the street would not have materially changed. At the rear there would have been a change to the property's character at ground floor level because of the box like design of the single storey extension. This planning permission remains extant and is a potential fall-back position to which I have had regard in assessing the appeal scheme.
7. By comparison to what was approved, the proposed development includes a larger single storey box like rear extension; the loss of one of the 2-storey gables to the rear of the property; a new central rear gable feature; a 2-storey side extension; an increase in the height and form of the property's main roof; the erection of dormer windows within the roof slopes and an enlarged central gable within the front elevation. The scale and design of the proposal would materially alter the proportions, form, character and appearance of the property's rear and front elevations.
8. When viewed from Manor Road and assessed individually, the proposed 2-storey side extension would be neither an unsympathetically designed or disproportionate extension to the property. Its size and appearance would be similar to the addition observed during the site visit at No. 27. There would remain adequate and appropriate visual and physical separation from No. 58 to maintain the spacious and verdant appearance of the streetscene. The proposed fenestration, including the bay window, would be sympathetic to the host property. A condition could be imposed to require matching external materials.
9. However, in combination the alterations to the roof, the dormers and the central gable, the proposed 2-storey side extension would significantly alter the bulk, form, proportions and character of the property in a manner that would detrimentally affect its appearance and positive contribution to the streetscene of the Conservation Area. Although there are examples of crown roofs within the Conservation Area, the proposed alterations to the property's roof would also contribute towards giving the resulting dwelling a bulky form and appearance.
10. Although some elements may be individually acceptable, the cumulative impact of the loss of a gable, the size of the box like single storey extension and the various alterations to the roof would be significantly detrimental to the Arts and Crafts style of the host property's rear elevation. This significant harm would be accentuated by the poor quality design of the fenestration, particularly the replacement opening for the lost gable and the window at second floor level within the proposed central gable.

11. Overall, the appeal scheme would not be of a high quality of design because it would fail to adequately complement the scale and form of the host property's Arts and Crafts style and, as such, it would conflict with UDP Policies BE1 and H8 and LP Policy 7.4. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) core principle of securing high quality design.
12. I agree with the appellant that the resulting property would be capable of being accommodated within the curtilage and it would not alter the overall verdant and spacious character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, it is the cumulative effect of the scale and design of the proposed alterations that would cause significant harm to the form, proportions, character and appearance of the property. The resulting dwelling would materially detract from the property's current positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
13. Although less than substantial harm would be caused to the Conservation Area this matter is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed development. Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Manor Way, Beckenham Conservation Area and, as such, it would conflict with UDP Policies BE1, BE11 and H8, LP Policies 7.4 and 7.8 and the Framework.

Other Matters

14. The proposed development would not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties but this matter is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm which has been identified. Accordingly, and taking into account all other matters, it is concluded that this appeal should fail.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR