

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2016

by Jason Whitfield BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21st December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/16/3157970

215 Bexley Road, Eltham, Greenwich SE9 2PN

- 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 Fastglobe Ltd against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/0654/F, dated 26 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of a new attached 3 bedroom house, alterations and part 1-2 storey rear extension to existing property and provision of associated crossovers and landscaping works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling located within a predominately residential area. There is a cohesive pattern of semi-detached properties on this part of Bexley Road, and indeed on Rennets Wood Road. The properties are broadly similar in width and have large gaps between. The appeal site, as with the majority of surrounding properties, is located upon a large plot. This character is continued along Rennets Wood Road. The size and spaciousness of the plots gives the wider area an open, suburban character. Indeed, this is exemplified by the appeal site due to its large side garden which is within a prominent position on the corner of Bexley Road and Rennets Wood Road.
 4. It is proposed to erect an attached, two-storey house to the side of 215 Bexley Road. Whilst the proposed dwelling would adopt some external features which would reflect the existing building, it would have a ridge and eaves height which would match that of the existing property. It would not, therefore, appear as a subservient addition to the existing pair of semis.
 5. Whilst I recognise there is a large block of modern flats on the corner opposite, the proposal would create a distinct terrace of three dwellings. This would be in stark contrast to the prevailing, well-ordered and repetitive rhythm of semi-detached pairs which characterise the area. Moreover, the proposed dwelling
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would be around 4.9m in width. This would be notably more narrow than No 215, as well as surrounding dwellings.

6. The proposal would also effectively split the existing plot of No 215 in half. Both properties would therefore have gardens which are much smaller than surrounding properties and which would fail to respond to the important contribution that spacious plots make to the character of the area. What is more, the property would occupy the majority of the side garden of No 215. This would erode the contribution of the existing side garden to the character and appearance of the area. Given the location of the appeal site, the development would be widely visible along the busy thoroughfare of Bexley Road. As a result, the proposal would fail to respect the established pattern of development in the area and would not be commensurate with the overall built form or indeed the profile of neighbouring dwellings. Instead, it would feature as prominent and incongruous addition to the street scene.
7. The proposal includes an extension to the rear of 215 Bexley Road. This would be a ground floor extension with a first floor element to provide a bedroom. The Council has raised no objections to this aspect of the development in respect of the character and appearance of the area and on the evidence before me I have no reason to disagree. Nevertheless, it would be intrinsically linked to, and would not be functionally severable from, the rest of the proposal
8. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As a consequence, it would conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan¹ which require a high standard of design. It would also conflict with Policies DH1, H5 and H(C) of the Core Strategy² which state that development should positively contribute to the improvement of the built environment and maintain the character of the area.

Other Matters

9. I note the relatively sustainable location of the appeal site, as well as the contribution the proposal would make to the housing supply within the area. However, the provision of one additional dwelling would be a relatively modest contribution and the benefits of such would be outweighed by the harm arising to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Given the design, scale and projection of the proposed rear extension I am satisfied it would not be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of 217 Bexley Road or 2 Rennets Wood Road. I have also had regard to the concerns of neighbouring residents with regard to the value of surrounding dwellings, highway safety and drainage. However, given my findings on the main issue above, they do not bring to me any different overall conclusion.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jason Whitfield

INSPECTOR

¹ The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011, 2016

² Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014