
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2016

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 11 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/16/3159988

41 Little Heath Road, Bexleyheath, Bexley DA7 5HE

- 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 Johnathan Halling against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 16/00561/FUL, dated 7 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is single storey first floor rear extension and loft conversion together with rear garden room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of the development varies between the application form and the subsequent documents. I have used the description on the application form as it describes the development more succinctly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site at 41 Little Heath Road is located within a predominantly residential area which appears to date from around the 1930s. No 41 is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings of a form which is typical of the area. The pairs were designed to be symmetrical, with hipped roofs and a central chimney stack.
 5. I accept that alterations have been carried out to numerous properties in the area, reflecting individual expressions of taste. However, the distinctive form of the paired dwellings remains characteristic of the majority of Little Heath Road, and contributes significantly to the local aesthetic of the area. I accept also that the proposed external facing materials of the development would complement the existing house, and that it would not exceed the height of the existing ridge.
 6. However, the Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP, April 2004) sets out guidelines for extensions, and states that the roofs of new extensions should follow the pattern of the main roof and should have the same angle of
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pitch. In this case, the proposal would replace the hipped roof and the new extension would instead terminate with a gabled end. In departing from the simple hipped form, the development would result in an uncharacteristic roof shape which would be at odds with the prevailing architectural style in the area.

7. The proposal would therefore be an incongruous form of development that would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would thus conflict with UDP Policy H9, insofar as it seeks to ensure that development should be compatible with the character of the existing building and adjacent buildings.
8. My attention has been drawn to a gabled roof extension at 38 Cranbrook Road. However, I understand that this extension falls within the permitted development rights of that property, and as such was issued with a Lawful Development Certificate¹ by the Council. Whilst that development is similar to the appeal proposal, it is clear that it did not fall to be assessed against the relevant policies as it did not require planning permission.
9. I have also been referred to the gabled roof extension at 104 Little Heath Road. Whilst the full planning history of the building is not before me, it appears that this development was permitted prior to the implementation of the current local and national policies². The form of No 104 no longer reflects the prevailing character of its immediate neighbours, thus detracting from the local distinctiveness of the area, and would not justify the further harm that would arise from the appeal proposal. The appellant has also provided photographs of a number of other developments in the wider area, but these have not led me to a different conclusion.
10. In their reason for refusal, the Council has also referred to the proposal to insert four rooflights in the front roof slope of No 41. Whilst I observed on my site visit that front rooflights are not a predominant feature in the immediate area, I do not consider that the proposed rooflights alone would be so harmful as to warrant the withholding of planning permission.
11. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR

¹ 14/00453/LDCP

² 89/02001/FUL