
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2017

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 08 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/16/3160713

First floor flat, 103 College Road, Bromley, London BR1 3QG

- 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 Siobhan White against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref 16/020961/FULL1, dated 27 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is originally described as "To convert the attic space above our first floor flat into a separate dwelling. The property structure is a semi-detached house which already contains two flat dwellings (one on which we own). The new dwelling will take it to three in total".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on (a) the character and appearance of the area and (b) the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings having regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a first floor flat within a semi-detached dwelling at 103 College Road. The ground floor of the dwelling is another flat. The appeal property lies at the end of a row of similar semi-detached dwellings which are either houses or flats. Most of these dwellings have retained their original hipped pitched roof form, like the appeal property and its semi-detached neighbour.
 4. The proposal would replace the hipped roof to the side with a gable and extend the rear pitched roof with a dormer. There would be no increase in roof height but the introduction of the gable would markedly change the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings. The neighbouring semi-detached property would still have its original side hipped roof. Such a change would be prominent from the road especially given the exposed nature of the flank elevation by virtue of the openness of an adjacent medical centre's car park. Within the street scene, the gable extension would also be out of kilter with the other semi-detached dwellings which predominantly have side hipped pitched roofs.
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5. The dormer would extend across most of the rear pitched roof in terms of width and depth and in so doing, it would be overly large compared to the original roof. Together with the gable extension, there would be considerable bulk and massing adversely affecting the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. Although the dormer would not be so visible from the public realm, the flank of it would be seen as a continuation of the gable. Furthermore, the dormer proposal would result in particularly poor design for the reasons indicated and in this regard, the National Planning Policy Framework places great importance to the design of the built environment. Therefore, I attach little weight to the argument of a lack of public visibility as a justification.
6. There is a similar roof extension at 87 College Road but this property has a less noticeable presence by reason of its positioning within a row of dwellings and the Council has indicated that planning permission was not required for it. Further developments are shown in photographs with some extended dwellings having similarities to the appeal proposal. However, they merely served to confirm that the size and type of roof extension proposed here would adversely affect the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and wider area. Reference has also made to names of developed sites in Bromley but there is no detail provided to establish any meaningful comparison with the appeal site. Consequently, there are sufficient reasons to distinguish these other developments from the proposal before me and in any case, every proposal has to be considered on its particular planning merits.
7. In conclusion, the development would harm the character and appearance of the area for the reasons indicated. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policies BE1 and H8 of the London Borough of Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006, which collectively and amongst other matters, indicates that the scale and form of development should respect or complement the host dwelling and be compatible with the surrounding area, for development to not detract from the existing streetscene and for dormers to be of a size and design appropriate to the roofscape.

Living conditions

8. The proposed gable would have three windows within it, including a bathroom window that is likely to be obscure glazed. The proposed dormer would have a window and glazed doors behind a 'juliette' style balcony. The dormer openings would directly face the private outdoor space of No 103 whilst the side openings would face the adjoining Medical Centre. Therefore views from these openings into the neighbouring garden and dwelling at 80 London Lane would be oblique and distant given the separation provided by the garden serving No 103. For the neighbouring flat at 82 London Lane, there is similarly considerable separation and additionally there is no garden area to be affected.
9. For all these reasons, there would be no harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties having regard to privacy. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with policy BE1 of the UDP, which collectively and amongst other matters, require development to respect the living conditions of neighbours and ensure their environments are not harmed.

Other matters

10. The proposal would make a contribution to housing supply within Bromley in accordance with UDP policy H1. However, there would be harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area in conflict with UDP policies BE1 and H8. This conflict would be significant by reason of the proposal's poor design whilst the contribution to housing supply would be small. As a result, there would be a conflict with the development plan overall and planning permission should be refused as there are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR