
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 6 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/16/3163688

6 Whitecroft Way, Beckenham, Bromley BR3 3AG

- 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 & Mrs Steven and Katie Rae against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/16/03417/FULL6, dated 14 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension – demolition of part of garage to create 1m side space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor side extension – demolition of part of garage to create 1m side space at 6 Whitecroft Way, Beckenham, Bromley BR3 3AG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/16/03417/FULL6, dated 14 July 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 484/001, 484/002, 484/110, 484/111 and 484/120.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) A minimum 1m space between the side boundary of the site and the extension must be retained for the full height and length of the flank wall of the extension.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area including its effect on the significance of the Park Langley Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The proposal would add a first floor extension above an existing side extension and garage, the width of which would be reduced. The appeal property is a detached house located within the Park Langley Conservation Area. This is an
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estate laid out on 'garden city' principles where detached houses with a variety of layouts and designs are generally set in spacious surroundings. This attractive townscape with its architectural and historic associations are characteristics from which the Conservation Area derives much of its significance.

4. However, in some parts of the Conservation Area, such as the vicinity of the appeal site, this spaciousness between buildings with houses situated closer to one another, including as a result of extensions and garages. The neighbouring property at 4 Whitecroft Way is situated close to the boundary with No 6 adjacent to which it presents a two storey elevation. The existing arrangement at No 6 extends to the party boundary and together the two properties appear close to one another from the street. The proposal would have the effect of increasing the built form adjacent to this boundary although setting it back from its existing position at ground level.
5. The design, setback at first floor, set back from the boundary, lower ridge height and retention of an existing chimney would mean that the proposed extension would have a subservient appearance in relation to the host building and would not dominate it. Given the existing relationship between the appeal property and No 4, the proposed arrangement would not harmfully erode the existing character of the immediate vicinity of the buildings as a result of the set back from the boundary. It would not appear overly cramped as a result.
6. The closest part of the existing building to the road is a projecting bay feature, behind which first floor elements on the south side are set well back. Although the extension would be set farther forward than these other first floor elements it would appear as a discrete element and would remain set back from the bay feature. As a result would not appear incongruous in the streetscene.
7. In order to safeguard spatial standards of residential areas UDP¹ Policy H9 seeks a minimum 1m space to be retained between the site boundary and the full height and length of the flank wall of extensions with more generous spacing where higher standards exist. The appellants consider that the proposal would provide such a 1m gap. It is unclear from the Council's Delegated Decision report whether their objection is that they do not consider a 1m side space would be provided or whether they consider a larger one would be required.
8. There may be other situations within the Conservation Area where wider gaps are prevalent and consequently may need to be maintained to preserve its character and appearance. However, in this particular case the resulting space between the proposed extension and No 4 would ensure that the area's character and appearance and the significance of the Conservation Area would be preserved. Notwithstanding the explicit mention in the description of development, any doubts about whether the plans accurately show a 1m space could be addressed by way of a condition.
9. Having paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area I consider that the proposal would have a neutral effect thereby preserving its significance and avoiding harm to the area's character and appearance. As such the proposal would comply with UDP Policies BE1, BE11 and H9.

¹ London Borough of Bromley Unitary Development Plan, 2006 (UDP).

Conditions

10. It is necessary to specify the approved plans as this provides certainty. In order to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area it is necessary to require that materials match those of the host building. For the avoidance of doubt that the proposal would incorporate the 1m setback required by UDP Policy H9 it is necessary that this is specified.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area or the significance of the Park Langley Conservation Area and would comply with development plan policies. The appeal is therefore allowed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR