
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2017

by Graham M Garnham BA BPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/17/3168780
125 Halfway Street, Sidcup, DA15 8DA

- 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 Debra Sunley against the decision of London Borough of Bexley Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02820/FUL, dated 16 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is first floor side and rear extension with part pitched roof over side dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor side and rear extension with part pitched roof over side dormer at 125 Halfway Street, Sidcup, DA15 8DA in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/02820/FUL, dated 16 November 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: numbers RNS/349/1B (existing elevations), RNS/349/1B (proposed elevations), RNS/349/3B, RNS/349/4 and 1:1250 scale site location plan.
 - 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.

Main Issue

2. I consider that this is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the house and the pair of which it is part.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached house built in the chalet house style. This style is characterised by a relatively narrow but deep floorplan. The main ridge of the roof runs along the shared boundary, typically at right angles to the road. There is a shared heavy central gable over the first floor front bay window of each house. The roof drops to first floor eaves level at a normal
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pitch, and then more steeply down to terminate at ground floor eaves level. There is typically a small circular "port hole" type window at first floor level, in the triangle between the main bay window and the sloping roof. The pair thus has a very distinctive form, symmetry and appearance.

4. No.127 is the other half of the appeal pair. It has an existing first floor extension, flush with the main front elevation and out to the side wall of the house. This has a hip-type roof. The port hole window has been replaced by a more conventional window, as might suit a bedroom. The appeal property has a flat-roofed, first floor side dormer. This is set back a short amount from the front elevation and occupies much of the depth of the house. There is also a flat-roofed ground floor side extension, almost as wide as the host house and occupying the rear half of its depth.
5. In view of the above, I find that the integrity of design and balance of the pair has already been significantly compromised. Thus I consider that the issue turns mainly on whether the proposal would improve or detract from the appearance of the house and pair as they now are, rather than in relation to the original design and form of the building. In coming to this view, I have had regard to the context of the appeal property. It is situated towards the middle of a row of about 2 dozen pairs chalet houses along the south side of Halfway Street. The great majority of the individual houses have some kind of first floor side extension or dormer, of differing scales, shapes and designs. I observed only one pair in which the original form and design has been retained intact.
6. The proposal has three components. At the rear would be a small first floor extension with a hipped roof. This would be subordinate in height and scale to the host house; similar to the form of the rear end of the main roof; and similar in form and design to other rear extensions in the row towards the west. The Council does not object to this component, and I see no reason to take a different view.
7. The second component is the semi-hipped roof above the existing side dormer. The pitch at either end and along the side would closely resemble that of the main roof. The top would be noticeably lower than the main central ridge. I consider that this component would improve the shape and appearance of the existing dormer, which is prominent in the local street scene, and be subordinate in scale to the host house. It would be a positive addition to the house, which would impinge only a little on the appearance of the pair when seen from the front.
8. The most noticeable change would be the pitched roof over the existing ground floor extension. At the moment, this feature is not particularly prominent in the local street scene, despite an open corner location, being only slightly higher than the side fence along the Hollies Avenue boundary. The new roof would have a hip end. The pitch of the end and side roofs would more closely align with that of the lower part of the original roof, a vestige of which remains on the front elevation. In height it would be equal with the new roof of the side dormer, and thus subordinate to the main roof. A dormer in the hip end would have a flat roof, but this would be a minor part of the whole building. The overall assemblage would be complex in roof form compared to the simple planes of the original building. However, this characteristic has already been

significantly compromised, both on the host building and locally, as outlined above. The proposal as a whole would add significant volume and diversity of roof form. Nonetheless, I consider on balance that it would not detract materially from the present appearance of the building or the pair.

9. The building as enlarged would reflect the varied roofscape of the nearest house to the rear, some distance away on Hollies Avenue. The street scene at the crossroads junction is very mixed. On the opposite side of Hollies Avenue is a semi-detached house with a large side extension, bringing first floor accommodation quite close to the highway – as would the appeal proposal. Directly opposite, on the other side of Halfway Street, is a 3 storey block of flats. Diagonally opposite is a high brick wall along the highway boundary, largely hiding the residential development behind. Thus despite its prominent siting at the cross roads, I consider that the proposal would not form an unduly unattractive or intrusive feature in an eclectic street scene.
10. I have taken note of other examples of extensions referred to me by the appellant. I was not able to view them personally, and I know little of the circumstances behind them. I have confined my attention to the other material on file and to my observations at the site visit, to assess the individual planning merits of this proposal.
11. In finding the proposal acceptable in principle, it is nonetheless necessary to ensure that the materials used match those of the host house, in the interests of a satisfactory appearance. I impose a planning condition to that effect, as well as one specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty.
12. Subject to these conditions, I conclude that the proposal would be compatible with the character and appearance of the house and the pair of which it is part, and with adjacent buildings. It would thus comply with the relevant criterion of Policy H9 in the Bexley Unitary Development Plan [UDP] (2004). I also find no clear conflict with the provisions of the UDP Design and Development Control Guideline (2004), given the present appearance of the house, the pair and the local street scene.
13. There is therefore no reason to withhold planning permission and I allow the appeal.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR