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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 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: 4 April 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/16/3160881**

**36 West Heath Road, Bostall Heath, London SE2 0RX**

- 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 Malcom Hearn against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
  - The application Ref 16/01783/FUL, dated 20 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2016.
  - The development proposed is the removal of existing roof and chimney stacks and construction of new roof incorporating living space to existing first floor maisonette.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal building is a detached dwelling comprising two flats. It has a hipped roof with substantial chimneys located centrally in prominent positions to front and rear, and a projecting two storey bay which presents a gabled roof to the street. The proposal seeks to replace the main roof and chimneys with a mansard arrangement including dormer windows to front and rear.
  4. As a result of its design and appearance the building is an attractive one which makes a positive contribution to the streetscene and the character of the area. The buildings along West Heath Road are varied in their age, styles and appearance but contribute to a diverse but pleasant streetscape. Whilst roof types are similarly varied these are typically gabled or hipped roofs with no mansard type roofs in the vicinity. Although showing considerable distinction in form and architectural detailing, No 36 forms part of a discrete group of substantial villas of Edwardian or late Victorian appearance on the same side of the road to the east of the site. These retain many original features and together make a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance.
  5. The proposal would result in an incongruous roof form which would appear at odds with the host building. This effect would be accentuated by the awkward juxtaposition of the steeper lower roof slope with that of the retained front gable and the offset position of the front dormers which would lead to an asymmetric and cramped appearance within the new roof. Combined with the
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loss of the chimneys, this composition would erode the positive character and appearance the building currently possesses. The similar height of the proposed roof to the existing would not reduce this effect. The building's location opposite Canberra Road and its forward position in relation to neighbouring buildings to the west would make this effect particularly apparent in the wider streetscene. Furthermore, the alterations would render the building's appearance in harmful contrast to its neighbours to the east.

6. As a result the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. As the design and external appearance of the development would not be compatible with the character of the existing or adjacent buildings, and would adversely affect the streetscene, it would be contrary to saved UDP<sup>1</sup> Policies H9 and ENV39. These are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) requirement<sup>2</sup> that poor design which fails to improve the character and quality of an area should be refused.
7. This harm would not be outweighed by any benefits arising from larger or improved living accommodation. In support of his appeal the appellant points out that mansard roofs were in use in the Edwardian era from which the property dates. Whilst this may be the case, such a roof form is nevertheless not a characteristic of the area or those buildings on West Heath Road of a similar era. I note that the appellant advises that one of the chimneys is in poor condition and needs to be dismantled. However, such circumstances would not alter the harmful effects of the proposed roof form, nor would the use of a roof tile which seeks to replicate slate which the appellant considers originally covered the roof.
8. The Council considered that allowing the proposal would have set a precedent for similar developments. However, given the distinct characteristics of the appeal building and lack of directly comparable sites where this may apply being put forward, a generalised concern of this nature is not a matter I gave any weight to in reaching my decision.

## **Conclusion**

9. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the area, contrary to the development plan and the Framework. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

*Geoff Underwood*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 64.