

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2017

by A A Phillips BA (Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/17/3171722
88 Borkwood Way, Orpington BR6 9PF

- 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 B Cutting against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/16/05751/FULL6, dated 15 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey semi-detached residential property situated in a predominantly residential part of Orpington. The area is characterised by mainly semi-detached houses with some semi-detached bungalows and most properties face onto the highway with relatively small gaps between them where there are garages or parking spaces. Near to road junctions properties are generally set at an angle to the roads and this is the case with the pair of semi-detached houses of which the appeal site is part.
 4. There is a relatively large space to the side of the house between it and the adjacent property No 86 Borkwood Way. The verdant attractively landscaped front and side garden, well-maintained boundary hedge and highway verge near to the property create a high quality spacious setting for the property. The pair is situated in a prominent position which is highly visible on the approach up North Drive. The gap between the appeal property and No 86 exposes the side elevation of No 86 which itself is not a particularly attractive elevation. The appeal property exhibits some attractive features such as the brick work, curved flat roofs and the canopy above the porch.
 5. Many properties in the area, including corner plots, have been extensively altered and extended, including hip to gable roof extensions and two storey side extensions. The variety of these changes is part of the current character of the residential area, although not all extensions are attractive or sympathetic to the attractive residential surroundings.
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6. The proposed two storey side extension would approximately double the size of the property and, although it would be set back from the existing frontage and have a lower ridge line, would be a highly prominent and dominant feature which would detract from the character of the host and its immediate surroundings. It would not be subservient to the original dwelling and its highly visible position would emphasise its harmful effect.
7. Although I do not find that the proposal would break the building line established by other properties along Borkwood Way it would interrupt the pattern of residential properties on Borkwood Way which curve round to the existing house on the site. In that way the prominent two storey proposal would interrupt the established pattern of development in the locality and be at odds with its surroundings.
8. At my site visit I observed the spaces between buildings and noted that the distance between No 88 and No 86 is wider than many others in the area. However, the attractive, verdant landscaped gap is an attractive feature which makes an important contribution to the appearance of this part of the residential area and the setting of existing properties. Some of the existing landscape features would remain; however, to close the gap in the manner proposed would be harmful to the character and appearance of the immediate locality.
9. I can see that the proposal has been designed to include some of the interesting features of the existing property. Nonetheless, this does not persuade me that an extension of the size, height and bulk proposed would not be harmful.
10. The Council considers that the extension would be capable of being used as a separate dwelling unit which would be overdevelopment of the site. Whilst I appreciate this concern I note that the extended property would have only one stairway to the first floor and the overall layout, including the arrangement of bathrooms for example, does not clearly allow for such separation. Furthermore, in the event of allowing the appeal this matter could be mitigated by the attachment of a suitably worded condition preventing separation into two dwellings.
11. In support of the appeal the appellant has drawn my attention to other properties in the area with two storey side extensions and I observed each of these at my site visit. However, I do not know the circumstances of those cases or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. Furthermore, some of the examples are in the middle of rows of semi-detached properties, others are not in such prominent situations and they do not share the same locational characteristics of the current appeal site. In any case I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
12. The appellant has also drawn attention to their opinion that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring residential properties with respect to matters such as daylight, sunlight, privacy or overshadowing. There is no dispute between parties with respect to living conditions resulting from the extension. I also understand that the proposal would meet the latest standards of insulation, improve facilities for movement around the building and have some security benefits. These matters do not outweigh the harm I have found with respect to character and appearance.

13. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Policies H8, H9 and BE1 of the London Borough of Bromley Unitary Development Plan July 2006. Among other things, these seek to ensure that development respects and complements the scale, form and layout of adjacent buildings and areas and respects the gaps between buildings.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and taking into account other matters raised I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alastair Phillips

INSPECTOR