
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 3 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/17/3175490

156 Woolwich Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4LR

- 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 P Simmons against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 16/02911/FUL, dated 11 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is double storey side and single storey rear extensions.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

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

Reasons

3. While the Woolwich Road contains a variety of house designs, those on the same side and close to the appeal site, as well as those at the same end of Nursery Avenue, share a similar pattern of development of being semi-detached and retaining lateral gaps to their side boundaries. Though many have been altered and extended, they display a similar arrangement of roof forms and windows, though those in Nursery Avenue appear to use gables rather than hips on the front elevations. This consistency in siting and townscape contributes to the spacious character of the area and the attractiveness of its architecture.
 4. Extending the flank of the house right up to the boundary alongside the street in 2-storeys would break with the distinctive, spacious pattern of surrounding development. In this context, the 2-storey high flank wall proposed so close to the back edge of the footway would be an incongruous and intrusive element in the street scene and given the location of the site on the block corner, conspicuous in views in Nursery Avenue as well as in Woolwich Road. The effect would be particularly noticeable given the neighbouring house on the opposite corner of the street maintains a substantial gap to its boundary beside the street.
 5. The building forms of the proposed extensions would reflect those in the surrounding area and would not be out of character with the architecture of the house. However, the long, horizontal windows proposed in the flank elevation
-

would be at odds with the more vertically proportioned windows of the rest of the house and which characterise the townscape of the surrounding houses. Given their prominence in the street scene, their incompatibility with the window proportions in the area would be harmful to the cohesiveness of its townscape.

6. I appreciate that the other part of the pair of houses has been extended sideways, and that symmetry does not presently exist between the house forms. However, that extension maintains a substantial gap to the side boundary, similar in extent to the present gap beside the appeal house. This contributes to the spatial balance across the pair of houses. While the proposal would not create a terracing effect beside a neighbouring house, this would not outweigh its incompatibility with the distinctive pattern of development identified above.
7. The appellant draws my attention to a recent planning permission granted at 102 Blendon Road for a 2-storey side extension. However, it appears to concern a house between two neighbours rather than a house on a block corner as in this case. I note the photographs of other extensions, but without the details of their location or the circumstances which led to their development, I am unable to conclude if there are any direct parallels between them and the extension in this case, and they do not negate the harm identified above.
8. I acknowledge the lack of objection from neighbours to the scheme. Although I take account of the appellant's personal circumstances, these factors are not sufficient to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance that I have found.
9. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. It would be in conflict with saved policies ENV39 and H9 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan 2004 which say that the scale, siting, and design of development should be compatible with the character of the existing building and the surrounding area.
10. The proposal does not adequately address the environmental role of sustainable development as set out in the Framework, and would conflict with its advice which suggests that development should respond to local character¹. It would be at odds too with the Planning Practice Guidance² which advises that development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons above, and taking into consideration all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR

¹ National Planning Policy Framework 2012, paragraphs 7 & 58

² Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG 2014 as amended, paragraph 007, ID 26-007-20140306