
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 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: 5 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/17/3172288

1 St Margarets Avenue, Sidcup DA15 7NP

- 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 R Moulder against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 16/02879/FUL, dated 24 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with hip to gable and rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the host building, the pair of semi-detached dwellings of which it is a part and the area.

Reasons

3. In common with the majority of other semi-detached dwellings along the street, the appeal property shares a central gable feature with its neighbour which is flanked by hipped roofs. The proposal would replace a pair of hipped roofs separated by a valley with a gable end roof with a taller ridge set just below that of the central gable, along with a flat roof dormer which would extend across much of the enlarged rear roof slope.
 4. Whilst the appeal property and its neighbour at 3 St Margarets Avenue are not entirely symmetrical as a result of different configurations either side of the central gable feature they retain a degree of similarity in their overall built form and appearance. The increased ridge height combined with the gable end roof would result in an unbalanced appearance when viewed with No 3. Notwithstanding its simple form to the front, the shape and scale of the enlarged roof and the area of gable to the side would appear prominent and incongruous within the streetscene, including the row of hipped roof detached houses adjacent to the site to the south.
 5. Whilst other dwellings in the street display some variation in the detailed configuration of their roofs, these are predominantly hipped. This has resulted in the roofscape possessing a relatively high degree of consistency with which the appeal proposal would be at odds. The gable end and dormer treatment at 23 St Margarets Avenue referred to by the appellants appears as an isolated
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example within the street and has not resulted in such a variation at roof level within which the appeal proposal would appear less incongruous. Similarly, the 'half-hipped' dormer bungalow farther down the street from the appeal site appears as a discrete built form within the predominant hipped roofscape.

6. Although set in slightly from the proposed gable, the large rear dormer would add to the bulky appearance of the roof alterations which would be apparent from St Margarets Avenue. The dormer would extend across most of the extended rear roof slope creating a bulky appearance as well as an awkward juxtaposition with the ridge of the rear offshoot.
7. The rear of the appeal site and other properties are largely screened from Blenheim Court which runs to the rear by mature trees although glimpses are afforded beneath their canopies. However, when those trees are not in leaf the rear aspect would be more apparent as would the proposed rear dormer. This would appear in harmful contrast to the majority of rear roofs of properties in the vicinity of the appeal site which do not have such bulky extensions.
8. The effects of the alterations would not be significantly mitigated by the use of materials that match the host dwelling. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area as well as that of the host building and its neighbour. This would be contrary to saved UDP¹ Policies ENV39 and H9 which together, amongst other criteria, require residential extensions to avoid adversely affecting the streetscene by reason of scale, massing and height, and be compatible with the character of existing and adjacent buildings.
9. The dormer would not exceed the building's ridge height, would be on the rear roof slope and be set back from the main wall which would avoid conflict with the detailed requirements for roof extensions in the Council's guidance² which supports those policies. It would nevertheless conflict with the principles in that guidance which requires extensions to be subordinate to, and respect the character of, existing and adjacent buildings.
10. The proposal would not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) requirements for high quality design which responds to local character. Paragraph 65 of the Framework advises that permission should not be refused on the basis of incompatibility with an existing townscape where buildings would promote high levels of sustainability. However, not only is there no evidence that the proposal would demonstrate such a high level of sustainability but that paragraph goes on to advise that such concerns would have to be mitigated by good design which the appeal proposal would not display.

Conclusion

11. 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, the pair of semi-detached dwellings and the area, contrary to the development plan and the Framework. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

¹ Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan, 2004.

² Unitary Development Plan Design and Development Control Guidelines.