



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 September 2019

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/19/3229483

83 Parkhill Road, Bexley, DA5 1JB

- 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 La Tamsing against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 19/00638/FUL, dated 12 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Procedural Matter

1. The Council has altered the description of development to read 'alterations to the roof line incorporating a hip to gable end and a rear dormer extension to provide rooms in the roof space. Infilling of existing car port to provide a garage'. This more accurately describes the proposal and has been used by the appellants on the Appeal Form. I have used this description in assessing the appeal proposal.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the alterations to the roof line incorporating a hip to gable end and a rear dormer extension to provide rooms in the roof space. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the infilling of the existing car port to provide a garage, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/00638/FUL, dated 12 June 2018, and the plans submitted with it, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted, insofar as it relates to the infilling of the car port to provide a garage, shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: CD189/A1/01.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on plan no. CD189/A1/01.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located on Parkhill Road which is an attractive street and one of the main approaches into the centre of Bexley. 83 Parkhill Road (No 83) is a two storey semi-detached house with white render and bay windows, which forms part of a row of similar properties on this side of the road. The houses are set back from and slightly elevated above the street. They were built with hipped roofs and although many have been extended at the side, including the adjoining property, the majority of houses have retained this roof form. The appeal property has a two storey rear extension with a hipped roof to match the main house.
5. The proposed development would involve the alteration of the roof at No 83 to provide a rear dormer, replacing the existing hip with a gable. This would involve a significant and fundamental change to the shape of the roof which would unbalance the overall appearance of the pair of dwellings.
6. The rear dormer would occupy the full width of the roof and would project from the level of the ridge to the eaves. The lack of any set back from the side of the roof would increase the prominence of the dormer when viewed from the side. The houses are on a hill and No 83 is sited at a higher level than the adjacent property, 85 Parkhill Road. As a result of this step in levels, the proposed gable and dormer would be more prominent when viewed from the side and travelling up the hill. The alteration to the roof and addition of full width dormer would appear incongruous and out of character with the immediately surrounding properties and this harm would be accentuated by the prominent position of the row of houses on a main approach into Bexley.
7. The Council is concerned that the proposed development would give the appearance of an additional storey. This would certainly be the case when viewed from the rear, but as the house backs onto woodland and is not visible from the public domain, this would not harm the character of the area.
8. The appellant states that the roof alteration and dormer, including the change from hip to gable, could be achieved under permitted development rights and that planning permission is only required because the volume of the proposed works exceeds that specified in the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO). The appellant has drawn my attention to the two other properties in the row which have replaced hipped roofs with gables to accommodate rear dormers under permitted development rights. Whilst I do not dispute these points, it remains the case that the proposal before me does not fall within the scope of permitted development and therefore planning permission is required for the scheme in its entirety. This necessitates an assessment of all elements of the proposal against relevant policies and other material considerations.
9. Paragraph 124 of The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is concerned with achieving high standards of design to create better places to live and work. The appellant has commented that the proposal meets the needs of the owner/occupiers. However I am mindful of the advice contained

in Planning Practice Guidance that in general planning is concerned with land use in the public interest¹.

10. Paragraph 124 of the Framework goes on to say that being clear about design expectations is essential to achieving good design. The Council has set out design expectations for house extensions in its Unitary Development Plan 2004 (UDP) and accompanying Design and Development Control Guideline 2. It is these policies, rather than the GDPO, which provide the basis for assessing this proposal.
11. UDP Policies H9 and ENV 39 are clear in their requirements that development should be compatible with the character of the existing building and surrounding area. The Design and Development Control Guidelines says that the roofs of new extensions should follow the pattern of the main roof and have the same angle of pitch. Section 2.3.1 says that roof extensions should be set back from the main wall of the dwelling to avoid creating the appearance of an extra storey. The proposed development does not meet these expectations and is therefore not acceptable.
12. I interpret Core Strategy (CS) Policy CS05 as applying to the Bexley and Crayford area as shown on CS Map 3.6, rather than the areas defined as 'sustainable growth areas' on the key diagram (Map 3.2) which has been provided by the appellant. As such the appeal property does fall within the geographic area covered by the policy, which requires that new development is in keeping with the character of areas of semi-detached and detached family housing. The proposal does not comply with this aspect of the policy.
13. Consequently I conclude that the proposed alterations to the roof line incorporating a hip to gable end and a rear dormer extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to UDP Policies H9 and ENV39, CS Policy CS05, the Design and Development Control Guideline 2 and paragraph 124 of the Framework.
14. I acknowledge that the proposal would meet the needs of the family, would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring occupiers, is not located in a conservation area and that the materials would respect the existing building. However these factors do not outweigh the harm to the character of the area which I have identified.
15. The proposal to infill the existing car port to provide a garage would have an acceptable impact in relation to the existing house, surrounding area and neighbouring occupiers. It would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and is in conformity with UDP Policies H9, ENV39; CS Policy CS05; the Design and Development Control Guideline 2 and paragraph 124 of the Framework.

Conditions

16. I have specified the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to materials is necessary to ensure that the appearance of the infilled garage would be satisfactory.

¹ Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 21b-008-20140306

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the infilling of the existing car port to provide a garage, but dismissed insofar as it relates to the alterations to the roof line incorporating a hip to gable end and a rear dormer extension to provide rooms in the roof space.

Rosie Morgan

INSPECTOR