The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2020

by C Coyne BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/19/3239913
57 Goddington Lane, Orpington BR6 9DT

- 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 Christian Oribio against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
- The application Ref DC/19/01315/FULL6, dated 19 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2019.
- The development proposed is loft conversion with semi hip to gable conversion, 2 front dormers with pitched roofs, single storey rear extension, single storey side extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for loft conversion with semi hip to gable conversion, 2 front dormers with pitched roofs, single storey rear extension, single storey side extension at 57 Goddington Lane, Orpington BR6 9DT in accordance with the terms of the application Ref DC/19/01315/FULL6, dated 19 March 2019, and the plans submitted with it, 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 shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: GL-R00-EX-101; GL-R00-PR-101; GL-R00-EX-003; GL-R00-PR-003; GL-R00-EX-004; and GL-R00-PR-004.

    3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormer windows on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the adjoining property (no. 59), and the street-scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is one of a pair of similarly designed semi-detached bungalows situated within a residential suburb. The dwellings within the surrounding area comprise a variety of styles and types ranging from larger detached and semi-detached dwellings to more modest detached and semi-detached dwellings (both two-storey and single-storey). The majority of the dwellings in the area have both front and back gardens with some being larger than others. Several dwellings in the local area also have dormer windows on their front elevations one of those

being the adjacent neighbouring property to the west of the appeal property (no. 55). The proposed development relates to the construction of a single storey rear extension, a single storey side extension, and a loft conversion (including roof alterations to the gable end of the host property and the installation of two dormer windows to its front elevation).

4. The Council have raised the concern that as the proposed front dormer windows would be clearly visible from the highway, they would represent an obtrusive and discordant form of development harmful to the character and appearance of the host property, its attached neighbour and the street-scene in general. In addition to this the Council has stated that given that there are only a small number of other dwellings with front dormer windows that they should not be considered as a feature of the area's character.

5. However, the appellant has provided evidence citing several examples of similar dormer windows located on the front elevations of dwellings on Goddington Lane. Indeed, I myself observed these examples when on my site visit. Accordingly, I consider dormer windows to be a feature of the area in accordance with criterion (c) of Policy 6 of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan 2019 (BLP). Furthermore, I consider the proposed front dormers to be in keeping with the established character and appearance of the area, which comprises a mixture of dwellings of various types, styles and designs some of which have dormer windows to their front elevations.

6. I note the Council's points that some of these examples were permitted prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and were also primarily related to detached properties. However, I do not have the details of these cases before me or the circumstances which led to those decisions being taken. In any event, I have assessed this case on its own merits, taking into account the area's established character and appearance including any relevant historic development (regardless of when it was permitted or to which type of dwelling it relates).

7. I also note the Council's point that the proposed dormer windows would 'unbalance' the symmetrical appearance of the pair of semi-detached properties when viewed from the front. However, I consider the appeal property and its attached neighbour (and their current symmetrical appearance from the front) not to be particularly typical of the local area or street-scene given the mixture of dwelling types and designs found on Goddington Lane and within the surrounding area.

8. Moreover, the fact that the council have not raised any concerns in relation to the design of the proposed partial side gable extension (which is also clearly visible from the highway making the roof appear higher when viewed from the front) means that in essence the principle of the alteration of the roof of the host property (and hence its symmetrical appearance from the front) has been accepted by the Council. As a result, I can see no reason as to why this principle would not also be applicable to the proposed front dormer windows.

9. Consequently, based on the evidence before me, I consider that the proposed development would not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling, its neighbouring property or the street-scene. I therefore conclude, that the proposed development would accord with policies 6 and 37 of the BLP (adopted January 2019) which aim to ensure that new development proposals are of a high standard of design and layout, and that proposed dormer windows should be of an appropriate size and design, amongst other considerations.

Conditions

10. In addition to the standard implementation condition, I have imposed a necessary condition to define the plans with which the scheme should accord in the interest of precision. I have also imposed a condition requiring the use of matching materials in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Coyne

INSPECTOR