



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 June 2020

by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/20/3245922

63 Kingsway, Petts Wood, Orpington, BR5 1PN

- 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 Vidas Vaickus against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application ref DC/19/02737/FULL1, dated 21 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of replacement dwelling and associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character.

Reasons

3. The site lies within the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character in which Policy 44 of the Bromley Local Plan 2019 requires development to respect, enhance and strengthen its special and distinctive qualities. Appendix 10.6 of the Plan sets out further details of the area and criteria to consider in relation to proposals for new development in the area.
4. The distinctive character of the area derives from its development along garden suburb principles with a regularity in front and rear building lines and a generous degree of spacing between buildings, which enables views through to trees and tall shrubbery in rear gardens. Buildings front onto the roads, with low front walls allowing views across front gardens. This layout, together with the street trees, contributes to the spacious and verdant character along Kingsway.
5. Buildings are generally of similar sizes and heights and use a similar palette of materials. There are good examples of Arts and Crafts and mock Tudor detailing in many of the buildings, which contribute to the garden suburb aesthetic and the quality of design in the area. Roof forms are mostly fully pitched and hipped, with the use of projecting front gables and double height bay windows being common features.

6. The existing property reflects the spacing of detached houses to be found in the locality with a side alley on one side and a garage on the other. It is further separated from the houses on either side by their garages and drives. These generous gaps allow views through to mature trees in the rear gardens.
7. In contrast the replacement dwelling would span more widely across the plot than the existing dwelling, with the two storey flank elevations separated from the side boundaries by only 1m and 1.3m respectively. Typically, where a detached dwelling in the Petts Wood area is close to a boundary on one side it has compensating space on the other to maintain the sense of openness between dwellings. The proposed scheme lacks this sense of space and in my view would appear cramped when compared to the more generous degree of spacing prevalent in the area.
8. On my visit I noted that there are examples of houses in Kingsway which have been extended or modified so that they span across their plots leaving relatively small gaps to side boundaries. It is likely that these extensions were carried out in the past before the adoption of the Bromley Local Plan 2019, in which Policy 44 now places an emphasis on development respecting, enhancing and strengthening the special and distinctive qualities of the area. It is against this policy requirement that I have assessed the current appeal scheme. If allowed to be repeated, the loss of generous spacing between dwellings would erode one of the special qualities that distinguishes the Petts Wood area from other suburban locations.
9. There are also some aspects of the design that would not respect the prevailing character and appearance of the area. It would fail to incorporate any of the rich detailing that distinguishes dwellings in the Petts Wood area, the fenestration would be large, plain casement windows with inset side panels rather than the smaller paned casements on existing dwellings in the road, and the box dormer on the rear roof slope does not reflect the generally uncluttered roofscape to be seen in the area. These aspects of the design would contrast incongruously with the more detailed 1920s and 30s style of buildings in the road, which in my view would be to the detriment of the overall character of the area.
10. The design would incorporate a large basement. Once built this would not be readily apparent in public views of the site. There would be light wells at the front and rear of the building but these would be at ground level and not prominent. In my opinion the basement would not cause any harm to the character or appearance of the area. Similarly, hardstanding of part of the front garden would not be detrimental to the appearance of the site as space for planting would remain. While I raise no objection to these aspects of the scheme, they do not mitigate the harm caused by the lack of space or the design features referred to above.
11. I conclude that, because of the lack of space and certain aspects of the design, the development would harm the character and appearance of the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character and thereby conflict with Policies 4, 37 and 44 of the Bromley Local Plan 2019, which require new development to be of a high standard of design and layout that respects, enhances and strengthens the special and distinctive qualities of the area.

Other Matters

12. I acknowledge that the internal living space comfortably exceeds the minimum space standards required by the London Plan, that the amount of garden space and parking provision are satisfactory for the development proposed, and that highway access and accessibility meet the required standards set out in Local Plan policies. However, the absence of harm on these issues does not justify allowing a development that is unacceptable for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

13. I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR