



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2020 by C Brennan BAE (Hons) M.PLAN MIPI

Decision by Alex Hutson MRTPI CMLI MArborA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/19/3242494

2 Halfway Street, Sidcup DA15 8LL

- 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 Mrs Charlotte Valinotti against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
- The application Ref 19/02096/FUL, dated 26 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2019.
- The proposed development is roof alteration including the addition of 2 skylights on each side elevation and addition of a single dormer on northwest elevation replacing existing 2 single dormers, as well as replacement of 3 windows on southeast elevation with a set of bifold doors.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Halfway Street Conservation Area (HSCA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that with respect to development affecting buildings or other land in a conservation area, "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."
 5. The appeal site accommodates a detached mock Tudor-style bungalow on the corner of Halfway Street and Burnt Oak Lane. It is situated within the HSCA. The Halfway Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2008 (HSCAAMP) sets out that the special character of the HSCA is largely derived from its historic street pattern, the architectural interest of its various buildings, and the strong presence of trees along Halfway Street.
 6. The Council raises no concerns in respect of the replacement of three windows on the southeast elevation of the appeal property with a set of bifold doors. I have no substantive reasons to take a different view.
-

7. However, the roof of the appeal property features six dormer windows of a modest size. Due to their hipped roofs and similar proportions, they have a coherent and consistent appearance that contributes to the distinctive mock Tudor-style architectural form of the appeal property. In addition, given their modest size, they appear as subservient additions to the roofslope. The proposed dormer on the northwest elevation would replace two of these existing dormers with a much larger one. Due to its size and flat-topped roof form, the proposed dormer would appear as a disproportionate addition that would contrast poorly with the existing dormers and would represent an overly dominant and incongruous addition that would undermine the architectural interest of the appeal property. This is notwithstanding that the building is not locally listed or that the proposed dormer would represent only a small increase in overall roof volume. Moreover, I observed that the proposed dormer would be visible from public vantage points along Halfway Street. As such, I consider that the proposed dormer would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the HSCA.
8. I note that the appellant asserts that the proposed skylights would be recessed into the roofslope. However, this assertion appears to be at odds with the submitted drawings, which indicate that they would protrude from it. Given this, and notwithstanding that the Council does not appear to have made an assessment of these skylights, I have concerns that they would appear as overtly modern and discordant features within the roofslope, and would therefore appear at odds with the architectural form of the appeal property and, by extension, would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the HSCA. I also note that the HSCAAMP identifies that the addition of modern features, such as roof lights, can be harmful to the character and appearance of a building and the HSCA.
9. Nevertheless, having regard to paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I consider that proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the HSCA. Such harm, as set out in paragraph 196 of the Framework, should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. Nonetheless, I have not been presented with any compelling evidence from the appellant to this effect.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal, overall, would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the HSCA contrary to the requirements of the Act and that the harm identified, albeit less than substantial, would not be outweighed by public benefits as required by paragraph 196 of the Framework. It would also conflict with Policies CS01 and CS06 of the Bexley Core Strategy 2012 and saved Policies ENV39 and H9 of the Bexley Unitary Development Plan 2004. These policies, require, amongst other things, development to be designed to a high standard, to respond positively to the character of the surrounding area, to be compatible with the character of existing buildings and to preserve the historical value of conservation areas.
11. In addition, the proposal would also conflict with the guidance of the Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines 2 2004, which advises that extensions should respect the character of the existing building.

Other Matters

12. Whilst the appellant indicates that the proposed dormer has been designed taking into account pre-application advice from the Council, such advice does

not prejudice the Council's decision on a subsequent planning application. In any event, it falls on me to assess the proposal, which as can be seen from my reasoning above, would, overall, be unacceptable.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Brennan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Alex Hutson

INSPECTOR