



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2020

by N Holdsworth MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/20/3245476
53, Park Road, Beckenham, BR3 1QG

- 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 Anandha Ponnampalam against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
The application Ref DC/19/04617/FULL6, dated 25 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 January 2020.
 - The development proposed was originally described as conversion of existing garage to habitable room, part single part double side and rear extension, roof alterations to form loft conversion to include gable end at front and roof lights and elevational alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The effect of the proposal on i) the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and ii) the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring residential properties, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Park Road is composed of large, individually designed, detached houses and blocks of flats set in spacious grounds. There is a good overall standard of design of which the host property is an example. Its hipped roof is a subservient element of the building; the gradual decline in bulk as it rises to its central ridge line helps to accentuate the attractive front elevation of the property with its uniform brickwork, sash and bay windows. It reads as a pair with No.55 Park Road, which has a similarly designed hipped roof.
4. The proposed works amount to a substantial redesign of the building following a series of extensions, particularly at roof level. When viewed from the road, two separate roof elements would be set off a new front facing gable. However, the gable end facing No.51 Park Road would be substantially bulkier than the hipped addition facing No.55. Consequently, the roof of the building would have a lopsided and incomplete appearance. This would significantly detract from the overall appearance of the property, particularly when viewed from the road.
5. The Council also raise concerns about the depth, scale and overall massing of the extensions to both front and rear, together with the proximity to the site

boundaries. However, the existing structure already extends to each boundary and a reasonably sized gap would be retained to each neighbouring property, above ground floor level. In these particular circumstances it is reasonable to make an exception to the requirement, set out in policy 8 of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (2019) ("Local Plan") that one metre minimum space is retained to the side boundary for the full height and length of the building, where two storey extensions are proposed.

6. The extensions to the rear, including those at first floor and roof level, would represent a noticeable increase in bulk. However, they would still only occupy a minimal proportion of the large plot associated with the building. There are many buildings of similar and greater size, including blocks of flats, visible from the appeal site. In this context, the property would not appear over-extended.
7. However, because of the poor design of the roof when viewed from the road, there would be an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of both the host building and the surrounding area, as a consequence of this proposal. It therefore conflicts with Policies 6 and 37 of the Local Plan which seek, amongst other things, to achieve a high standard of design where residential extensions are proposed.

Living conditions

8. The main part of the garden of No.51 is around 2 metres below the garden of the appeal site. The extension would be built very close to the boundary of this neighbouring garden, rising above it at a point where there is no building at present. Because of the change in levels, the increase in bulk over the existing boundary treatment would be very significant. Consequently, the single storey extension on the common boundary would appear awkward and overbearing, when viewed from the garden of No.51. There would be an increased sense of enclosure and unacceptable loss of outlook, in this respect, which would not be effectively mitigated by any retained trees or vegetation.
9. The same effect would not occur in relation to No.55. This neighbouring garden is at a similar level to the garden of the host property. Consequently, the modest additional bulk and projection of the single storey extension along the common boundary, beyond that which already exists, would not be of a scale that significantly affects the outlook from either the neighbouring building or its garden.
10. In other respects, as previously noted, the host property and its immediate neighbours are set in large plots. There is a good degree of visual space around them, and an open outlook in most directions. This would generally be retained, under the proposed situation. Because of their set back away from each side boundary, the extensions at first floor and roof level would not be significantly overbearing when viewed from any neighbouring building or garden. Any loss of outlook through the encroachment of the extended building in to views from windows within these neighbouring properties would be insignificant, given the separation distances involved.
11. However, the overall effect on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring residential properties would be unacceptable due to the loss of outlook to No.51, caused specifically by the proximity of the ground floor extension to the garden of this property. In this respect the proposal conflicts with policy 37 of the Local Plan which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure

that new development respects the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring buildings.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

12. The Council also make reference in the reason for refusal to the Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance No.1: General Design Principles; and Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance No.2: Residential Design Guidance. These documents share similar broad objectives to the development plan policies cited above in that they seek to achieve good design and protect the amenity of residential occupants. The proposal also conflicts with these planning policy documents. However, as they are not part of the development plan they are of minimal relevance to the final decision.

Other Matters

13. Interested parties raise concerns about the accuracy of the submitted plans. However, they were sufficiently detailed to enable an assessment of the case to occur. In combination with my site visit, there was adequate information to assess the proposal and decide the appeal.
14. I have had regard to all the other grounds of objection raised by local residents, including concern about loss of light which was not specifically highlighted in the Council's reasons for refusal. However, any reduction in natural light experienced by the occupants of neighbouring properties would be of minimal significance given the separation distances involved. Issues relating to loss of privacy could be addressed through the use, where appropriate, of obscure glazing in the respective side elevations. These issues, alongside the other concerns raised, do not add to the harm identified in the two main issues discussed above.
15. The proposal would help modernise the host building and achieve the owners aspirations for the property, and in doing so would provide access for people with limited mobility. Sufficient space would be retained on the site for off street parking. As such, the proposal would improve the living conditions of the existing residential property. However, these considerations do not outweigh the harm identified in the two main issues in this appeal.

Conclusion

16. In conclusion, the appeal fails because of the poor roof design in relation to the road, and the proximity of the single storey extension to the side boundary of No.51. The proposal would therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, and to the living conditions of existing residents. It conflicts with the development plan and there are no other considerations that outweigh this finding. The appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR