



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2020

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/20/3250752

7 Somerhill Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA15 9JT

- 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 Alex Wilkin against the decision of the London Borough of Bexley Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02776/FUL, dated 7 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a part one part two storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effects of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling; and
 - the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers at 5 Somerhill Avenue (No 5), with particular reference to enclosure and outlook.

Procedural Matters

3. I have used the description of development from the London Borough of Bexley Council's decision notice, which, from my reading of the documents before me most clearly describes the proposal.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The host dwelling is a semi-detached house with a chalet style roof, in an area of houses of similar design and scale, many of which appear to have been extended and altered over time. At ground level the proposal would involve the demolition of the existing rear single storey kitchen and construction of an extension across the full width of the host dwelling, projecting rearwards into the garden. At first floor level the proposed extension would project to the rear to the same extent as the ground floor element of the proposal but would be approximately half the width. At first floor level this would be set back from the boundary with No 5, resulting in a single storey extending approximately 5 metres along the boundary of this adjoining neighbour.

5. The proposed first floor element of the extension would be slightly set back from the front elevation of the host dwelling and would project over the drive of the dwelling by approximately 500mm beyond the existing side elevation. This would result in the first floor extension appearing as a jettied dormer extension.
6. The appellant has drawn my attention to other houses in the local area, some of which have been extended with a similar jettied dormer type extension. These, however, do not appear to have been jettied to the extent proposed and I have therefore given only moderate weight to these in my considerations.
7. The extent to which the first floor element of the proposed extension is jettied would result in an excessive overhang and to it not appearing as a subservient addition to the host dwelling. In views from the street, the proposed extension would appear as an incongruous addition to the existing dwelling and, thereby, visually unbalanced in relation to its semi-detached pair at No 5.

Living conditions

8. The proposed single storey element of the rear extension would be to the side boundary of the host dwelling with its adjoining neighbour at No 5, extending by approximately 5 metres further rearwards than the existing dwelling at this point. Taking in to account length of the of the side wall of the extension proposed along the boundary, and that it would be in close proximity to glazed doors (including patio doors), and windows of No 5, I find that this would result in an overbearing sense of enclosure and loss of outlook when experienced from the ground floor rooms of No 5.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to other houses in the local area, some of which have similar rear extensions and to 46 Montrose Avenue (No 46) in particular, which was allowed on appeal¹. These do not appear, however, to have extensions that extend along the boundary to the same extent as the proposal, or to have the same overbearing sense of enclosure and effect on outlook. In the case of No 46 the single storey extension is smaller than that of the proposed and was considered on its own merits and I have therefore given only moderate weight to these in my considerations.
10. Therefore, I find that the proposed extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with policy CS07 of the London Borough of Bexley Core Strategy, saved policies ENV39 and H9 of the Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan 2004 and the Design and Development Control Guidelines contained therein, which collectively seek to ensure that developments, are of an appropriate scale, subservient to the host building and protect neighbour amenities.

Conclusion

11. Although the policies of the UDP are now of some age, they do accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and I have given them significant weight in my considerations. Whilst the Framework places significant emphasis on maximising homeowners' freedom to alter and extend their properties to improve their living conditions, it also requires that new development should be sympathetic to local character and provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/18/3196091

12. I have considered the evidence provided of other residential extensions approved in this area. However, the details and effects of these all differ and it is necessary for me to assess this proposal on the basis of its own individual merits.
13. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR