



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/20/3251894

188 Rochester Drive, Bexley DA5 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 Menelik Wilkinson against the decision of the London Borough of Bexley Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00274/FUL, dated 31 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is for part one/part two storey front, side and rear extension incorporating front porch. Alterations to roofline to provide rooms in the roofspace incorporating a rear dormer extension with Juliet Balcony. Alterations to front boundary. Single storey detached outbuilding in the rear garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue of this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the host building and local area

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

4. The appeal dwelling is located in a predominantly residential area and is a two storey semi-detached house with a hipped roof that sits in an elevated position in a row of similar properties overlooking Rochester Drive and the A2, many of which appear to have been extended and altered over time. The proposal would create a more substantial house out of the existing dwelling, which is located on a good sized site within the context of the local area made of modestly scaled dwellings.
5. I am aware that the appellant has sought to overcome concerns raised regarding earlier applications, and the main issue of this appeal relates to the proposed side extension that would replace the existing single storey garage. This element of the proposal would align with the front elevation and extend the existing hipped roof form. This would create a garage space below the existing ground level of the appeal dwelling, with two storeys above.

6. The proposed side extension would appear as a significant addition to the existing house that would fundamentally alter its apparent scale and appearance. This is due to the extent of the proposed side extension, that would result in it aligning with the existing front elevation and its massing at roof level, which would be a continuation of the existing hipped form and roof ridge line. The proposed extension would, therefore, not appear as a subordinate addition but would dominate the appearance of the appeal dwelling and would result in an unbalanced appearance.
7. The proposed side extension would, therefore, be an incongruous addition that would not maintain the integrity of the appeal dwelling, resulting in an unduly bulky and unbalanced appearance in relation to its semi-detached pair and not in keeping with the character of the local area. This would be apparent from the front of the house and from views along the street and wider area. It is noted that Rochester Drive only has properties on one side and opens onto the A2, which provides for extensive views of the appeal dwelling.
8. The appellant has drawn my attention to houses in the immediate local area that are similar to the appeal dwelling and that have been the subject of two storey side extensions. These vary considerably in scale and form, and no additional details or indication of their age has been provided. As these would have been considered on their own merits, I have, therefore, given little weight to these in my considerations.
9. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and the surrounding area and would consequently conflict with policy CS01 of the London Borough of Bexley Core Strategy, saved policies ENV39 and H9 of the Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan 2004 (the UDP) 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 relating sympathetically to the built surroundings and in keeping with local character.

Conclusion

10. 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 of good design and sympathetic to local character.
11. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR