
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2020

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/20/3251800
33 Ockham Drive, Orpington BR5 3DT

- 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 Rrahman Tobli against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/20/00427/FULL6, dated 22 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey end terrace house situated towards the head of a residential cul-de-sac along which dwellings are similar in age and style. It stands at right angles to the adjacent property, 35 Ockham Drive, which is also a 2-storey house. Due to this arrangement, the gap between the front corners of Nos 33 and 35 is much narrower than it is at the rear. The appeal dwelling also occupies an irregular shaped plot that widens from the footway in front of the property to the rearmost part of the back garden.
4. The new 2-storey side extension would follow the building and rooflines of the main house with the chamfered front corner almost up to the shared boundary with No 35. This arrangement would be at odds with Policy 8 of the Bromley Local Plan (BLP), which states that a minimum 1-metre space should be retained between 2-storey residential extensions and the side boundary. The supporting text to this policy explains that it is intended to ensure that such development avoids a cramped appearance and protects the high spatial standards and visual amenity that characterise many residential areas.
5. With external materials to match the existing building, the visual effect of the proposal would be to elongate the front elevation of No 33 across almost the entire width of the plot. When seen from the grassed area just in front of the site, the finished building would appear much closer to No 35 than the existing house with limited space between the front corners of these adjacent dwellings.

6. As No 35 is set back from the shared boundary with the site, a gap would still remain between the new addition and this adjacent dwelling, as the appellant has illustrated in the grounds of appeal. However, the space provided would be perceived differently depending on the viewpoint. On the immediate approach to the site along the road, a noticeable gap between Nos 33 and 35 would be evident. However, from in front and just to one side of the site, these dwellings would be perceived as being uncomfortably close together because the full extent of the space between them would be less visible.
7. By altering the balance of space around the completed house and given the way in which it would be perceived relative to No 35, I share the Council's concern that the proposal would appear overly large for the plot and cramped in terms of layout. It would contrast markedly with the generally more spacious pattern of existing development along Ockham Drive in particular.
8. The appellant has drawn my attention to the end terrace house at 22 Ockham Drive situated opposite the site that has a 2-storey side extension. However, unlike the proposal, the flank wall of No 22 is noticeably set back from the side boundary. As a result, it appears to more comfortably occupy the plot with greater visual separation to the adjacent property than would be the case with the appeal scheme.
9. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with BLP Policies 6, 8 and 37. These policies generally aim to ensure that residential extensions achieve a high standard of design and respect or maintain the space or gap between buildings where these contribute to the character of the area.
10. Once complete, the enlarged house would provide additional living space that would enhance the living conditions of the appellant. There would be no harm to the living conditions of others. The current occupier of No 35 has confirmed that the proposal would be sufficiently far away so as to not concern her. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the absence of objections from others, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR