
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: 23 November 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/20/3252598

39 Crossway, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent BR5 1PE

- 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 Dina Moon against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/20/00128/FULL6, dated 7 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2-storey side extension and first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. While the appellant has described the proposal as in the above header, the Council has referred to it as a 2-storey front and side extension, a first floor rear extension and a front porch. From my inspection of the plans, the Council's description more accurately reflects the development sought. I have assessed the appeal scheme on that basis.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey semi-detached dwelling within the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC), which has a strong suburban and spacious feel and contains buildings that vary in style and size. The properties that line both sides of Crossways in the vicinity of the site exemplify these characteristics. The Bromley Local Plan (BLP) notes that the residential feel of the ASRC is predicated by low boundaries and visible front gardens set back from the road as well as the width of the separation between the houses which is of a particularly high standard. I share that opinion. The site does not fall within a conservation area nor is No 39 a listed building.
5. The appeal dwelling stands back from the road behind a front garden and driveway with a largely open highway frontage. It has a staggered front build line and the main house has a hipped roof to the side. This arrangement adds to the sense of space around the front and side of the main building. It also

visually accentuates the prominence of the large forward projecting front gable, which is an important and distinctive feature of the appeal dwelling.

6. The proposal is to enlarge No 39 with extensions on 3 sides using external materials to match those of the existing building. The new 2-storey front addition would line up with the forward projecting gable and largely infill the side recess to the main house. The proposed flank wall would be set back from the site's side boundary to comply with the Council's minimum space standard under BLP Policy 8. This layout would make efficient use of the space available within the site. However, the resultant effect on the character and appearance of the host building, the pair to which it belongs and the local street scene would be significant.
7. Firstly, the proposal would noticeably add to the scale and mass of the host building. When seen from the road, the completed dwelling would appear more substantial in built form than the existing building with its front extension causing it to gain prominence in the street scene. Secondly, with a largely flat 2-storey front façade (save for the new open porch) extending across much of the plot's width the proposal would alter the balance of space around the main house. In particular, the sense of openness around the front corner and side of the main building would be significantly diminished, which would be evident from the road. Thirdly, the extended front roof slope facing the road would diminish the prominence and thereby significance of the distinctive front gable.
8. In combination, these changes would unduly compromise the original form of the appeal dwelling and noticeably reduce the sense of space around the front and side of the building. The main outcome would be that the finished 2-storey building would appear cramped in terms of layout even taking into account the new hipped side roof slope and the set back from the site's side boundary. This arrangement would be out of keeping with the more spacious layout of the appeal property and the general pattern of existing development within the ASRC even among the varied built form along Crossway with some buildings are located closer together than others.
9. As a result, the proposal would reduce the spacious feel within the street scene and thus undermine a key quality of the ASRC. It would also fail to achieve the standard of design sought by BLP Policy 37 and paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
10. I agree that the additional 2-storey built form to one side of the main house, as proposed, would, to some extent, provide a counterbalance to the 2-storey extension that has been introduced to 41 Crossway, which extends up to its side boundary. This attached property retains a varied front build line and the front gable continues to project forward of the main house, albeit in a modest way. The first floor dormer and ground floor garage help to visually break up its scale and mass and the access road beyond the flank wall of No 41 gives a sense of openness around the side of that dwelling. Given these differences in design and layout, the proposal would not restore a degree of symmetry to the pair as the appellant suggests. To the contrary, the irregularity in built and roof form between the completed dwelling and No 41 would exacerbate their differences and further upset the imbalance between them.
11. The Council has previously granted planning permission for a similar form of development compared to the proposal although that approval appears to have now lapsed. From the limited details provided, the approved scheme included

a modest set back in the front elevation and the Council states that there was greater separation to the boundary compared to the proposal before me. The Council's earlier decision also predates the BLP and the Framework, against which the proposal should be assessed. Consequently, I am unable to attach more than limited weight to this previous decision in support of the appeal.

Conclusion on the main issue

12. 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, 37 and 44 and Policy 7.4 of the London Plan. These policies aim to ensure that residential extensions complement the host building; respect or maintain the space between buildings where these contribute to the character of the area; positively contribute to the existing street scene; and respect the special and distinctive qualities of the ASRC. It would also fail to comply with the policies of the Framework insofar as they require development to add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character.

Other matters

13. Once complete, the additional accommodation would improve the living conditions of the appellant. The residential amenity of others would not be harmed if the appeal scheme were to come forward. The Council does not raise any technical concerns with regard the effects on drainage, highways and trees, amongst other things. However, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified in relation to the main issue.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, and taking into account the absence of objections from others, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR