



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2020

by C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/20/3253328

55 Preston Drive, Bexleyheath, DA7 4UF

- 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 S Broughton against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 20/00747/FUL, dated 25 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension and roof alterations to provide rooms in roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted a two storey side extension and roof alterations to provide rooms in roof space at 55 Preston Drive, Bexleyheath, DA7 4UF in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 20/00747/FUL, dated 25 March 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan 2019/164.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
 3. The property is a detached house in a road of predominately semi-detached houses. Adjoining the property to the south is No. 53 which is also a detached house, but has been extended with a two storey side addition of similar width to that shown in the appeal proposal.
 4. The extensions and alterations to No. 55 differ, though, with the proposed change in the existing hipped roof to be gable end, with a dormer to the rear. I saw at my site visit such alterations to roofs have taken place at a number of properties in the vicinity: most notably directly opposite the appeal site, where there are four houses with gable extensions. I also saw that along Preston
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Drive there are other houses with gable extensions, as well as two storey side additions.

5. The appellant has a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Development confirming that a scheme for alterations to the roof line including hip to gable conversion and two roof lights in the front roof slope to provide rooms in the roof space would be lawful, through the exercise of permitted development rights (ref. 19/02344/LDCP). I have little reason to doubt that the appellant would choose to implement this scheme should this current appeal fail as it would represent a sizeable increase in floorspace for the house. This therefore represents a realistic fall back position to which I attach considerable weight.
6. The circumstances in this case thus show proposed extensions and alterations to the property that would result in a house with a similar character and appearance to other houses seen in Preston Drive. The extended house would sit comfortably within the streetscene that now exists in the road and, in this context, would not appear discordant or out of keeping. The strong likelihood of the roof to the property being altered through implementation of permitted development rights weighs in favour of the works shown in this appeal. In any event, as noted, the property is detached and it is my judgement that the resultant form of the extended house would remain coherent as an acceptable element of design in the streetscene.
7. Policies H9 and ENV39 of the London Borough of Bexley Unitary Development Plan (2004) require, amongst other matters, the siting, design and external appearance of extensions and alterations to be compatible with the character of the existing building and adjacent buildings, and that development is compatible with the character of the surrounding area. The objectives of Policies CS01 and CS02 of the London Borough of Bexley Core Strategy (2012) also set out a requirement for a high standard of design. For the reasons given it is my conclusion on the main issue that the proposed development would represent a scheme that has not harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and so complies with the development plan.
8. The distance between the proposed extension, including the dormer window to the roof, would be sufficient to ensure no loss of privacy to nearby properties. The position of the appeal property – directly between the adjoining houses to the north and south – mean that windows in the side elevations would not lead to any appreciable overlooking to neighbouring properties. Nor would there be any overbearing impact.
9. The appeal is therefore allowed. I have attached a condition requiring matching materials, to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development, and a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR