Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 May 2021

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/20/3265807
77 Westwood Lane, Welling DA16 2HJ

- 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 & Mrs J Channer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
- The application Ref 20/02508/FUL, dated 3 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2020.
- The development is a proposed two storey side extension, part one/part two-storey rear extension, and alterations to roofline.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a semi-detached, two-storey property with off-street parking spaces to the front. The surrounding area is residential in nature; there is no prevailing architectural style and the neighbourhood is characterised by dwellings of various size, appearance and detailing. There are also differences in the widths of gaps between houses. The overall trend is towards the evolution of building form and appearance through the extension of houses over the years.

4. There are several elements to the appeal scheme. It would be evident from Westwood Lane that the ridge height of the two-storey side element would continue the ridge line of the existing property, and the front elevation would be flush with the host dwelling. The overall width would be comparative to the current residence.

5. Being flush with the front elevation and the ridge line, the side addition would lack subservience to the existing property. Taken together with its width, the addition would result in an imposing appearance that would be in contrast to the existing dwelling, and compete with its overall scale rather than complementing it. I consider that cumulatively these factors would result in a bulky extension to the detriment of the character of the building, and represent an excessive intrusion into the neighbourhood.

6. At the rear, the large, unbroken dormer window would dominate the roof of the property. It would be clearly visible from the private amenity spaces of surrounding dwellings, having a jarring effect by virtue of its scale and extent across the roof of the dwelling. Similarly, the flat-roof, first floor element lacks architectural subtlety and would appear obtrusive when seen against the form and scale of the existing dwelling.

7. I am aware that permission has already been granted for a single storey rear addition under permitted development rights. To my mind the enlargement of the ground floor would assimilate with the approved rear element. Given its low level nature and reduced visibility, I consider that the extension at rear ground floor level would not cause material harm to the character of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

8. I acknowledge that the development is acceptable in respect of the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring houses and adequate off-street parking would be retained. I also recognise that the scheme would provide for accommodation for the appellants and their family, together with the ensuing benefits financially and socially. However, this argument does not outweigh the harm to character and appearance that I have identified above. My attention is also drawn to the presence of other extensions and approved developments in the Bexley Borough. Nevertheless, additions to other houses would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and in any event each case must be assessed on its own merits.

9. I appreciate the appellant's frustration concerning the advice given by the Council at the pre-application stage. However, the current development continues to be unacceptable for the reasons I have outlined above.

10. On this basis, I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. It would contravene policies ENV39 and H9 of the Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan April 2004 and the Design and Development Control Guidelines 2004, which seek to ensure proposals relate to surrounding development, are of appropriate design and protect the character of an area.

Conclusion

11. Having taken full account of all of the matters before me, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR