



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2021

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/20/3264634
129 Upton Road, Bexleyheath DA6 8LS

- 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 Igor Smirnov against the decision of London Borough of Bexley Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02420/FUL, dated 25 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 December 2020.
 - The development is for Alterations to roofline incorporating hip to gable, rear dormer and two rooflights in the front roofslope to provide rooms in the roofspace and conversion of garage to store room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice. In Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development is the same as this description and neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that this description is erroneous. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the Council's decision notice and the Appellant's appeal form.
3. The new London Plan was formally adopted on the 2 March 2021, after the appeal was submitted. In these circumstances, although there are no directly comparable policies to those used in the original decision, I am required to determine the appeal against the current development plan for the area at the time of my decision which I have done.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is the impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a semi detached house that fronts onto Upton Road and forms part of one of three pairs of semi detached houses located along this part of the road all of which sport typical hipped roofs and brick and render materials to their elevations. Although there are different house types as one

moves along Upton Road, I consider that the three pairs of houses here form a cohesive element of townscape that are visually similar in many ways.

6. The existing house already has a two storey flat roof side extension and the proposal is to extend the property to accommodate a modified roof structure to this flat roof element along with changing the existing hip roof to gable on the main house. The proposals also include the insertion of rooflights to the front and a rear dormer. The proposal also intends to change the garage into a store room.
7. I understand that it is common ground between the parties that the proposed conversion of the garage to store room and the insertion of roof light windows to the front is acceptable and I have no reason to disagree with these proposals and also find such changes acceptable. The main issue therefore is concerned with the design of the proposed roof modifications and rear dormer.
8. Although I consider that some form of pitched roof over the existing flat roof extension would potentially improve the overall appearance of the property, I consider that the design before me does not fully achieve its aspiration of creating a well designed scheme. This is due primarily to the awkward juxtaposition between the proposed gable to the main house roof and the proposed hip over the first floor side extension.
9. This mix of roof styles would not only adversely affect the streetscene and the symmetrical nature of the semi detached properties nearby, but it would also be harmful to the character of the existing property itself. The result would be an awkward mix of roof styles that fail to integrate effectively and would ultimately cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
10. This harm will be compounded by the development of what I consider would be an overly large box dormer to the rear. In considering this dormer I am mindful of the Council's Design and Development Control Guidance¹ that seeks to avoid extensions creating what may appear as extra storeys. In this case, I consider that the size, scale and proximity of the proposed dormer to the eaves and ridgeline would contribute to having the effect of creating a third storey, which I consider would also be harmful to the property.
11. I note that the appellant has directed my attention to other such roof modifications in the local area and I saw on my site visit that the wider area contains various examples of house types and roof forms. However, I have no information before me as to the reasons or background to these other developments and so I cannot be certain that the circumstances are the same as the case before me. Nonetheless, I do not consider that further such changes would enhance or complement the overriding characteristics of the area or this particular part of Upton Road.
12. Although I acknowledge the appellant's openness to modify the proposed plans to be acceptable, I am required to only assess the full plans that are now before me. Although I consider that some options indicatively illustrated within the appellant's statement could contribute to an improved design I am unable to fully assess these plans as part of this appeal and as such I am unable to consider these changes as an alternative proposal.

¹ The Design and Development Control Guidance 2 within the London Borough of Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

13. Although I consider that there may be ways to extend this property in such a way as to avoid or minimise the harm I have identified above, I consider that the scheme before me would fail to meet the requirements contained within Policies ENV9 and H9 of the London Borough of Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP), the guidance within The Design and Development Control Guidance 2 as well as Policy SC02 of the Council's Core Strategy (2012), all of which seek to ensure that new developments are of a high quality standard of design. It would also be contrary to Policies D1, D3 and D4 of the new London Plan (2021) that the above policies are reflective of.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons above, taking into account all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR