



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 June 2021

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/W/21/3270914

11 Caversham Avenue, North Cheam SM3 9AQ

- 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 Gary Coombes against the decision of London Borough of Sutton.
- The application Ref DM2020/01637, dated 15 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2021.
- The development proposed is the demolition of existing single storey side extension and outbuilding in rear garden. Erection of an attached two storey dwelling with refuse and cycle storage. Erection of a single storey rear extension to the existing dwelling, alterations to existing first floor fenestration and boundary treatment.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Between the determination of the planning application and the appeal coming before me, the new London Plan¹ was adopted by the Mayor. The Council has subsequently indicated that Policies DF1, D3, D6 and S12 of the new plan are relevant to this appeal. The views of the appellant have been sought on the up to date development plan situation and I have determined the appeal with regard to the adopted development plan at the time I make this decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing house and street scene.

Reasons

4. Caversham Avenue is generally characterised by two storey, semi-detached properties. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached dwelling and occupies a corner plot on a sharp bend in Caversham Avenue. Opposite the appeal site, to the south west, is Beechmore Gardens, which features two storey properties with hipped roofs. A sense of spaciousness is apparent in the vicinity of the appeal site, derived from a combination of gaps between properties, buildings being set back from footpaths and limited built form close to street corners and junctions.
5. The existing appeal dwelling has been positioned to respect its corner plot and appears to sit slightly behind the building line of Nos.1-7 Caversham Avenue and is broadly in line with the fronts of Nos.13 onwards. The property has an

¹ The London Plan 2021

existing single storey side extension which is close to the boundary of the site and street corner. However, due to its design and the provision of the existing boundary fence and planting, its visual impact is limited. As a result, within the wider streetscene, the property retains an appearance of generally being set in from the edge of the site and so broadly conforms to the area's prevailing character and appearance.

6. The proposed works would replace the existing single storey side extension and would extend the building at both ground and first floor levels towards the edge of the site. Although the works are designed to present a similar side elevation to what currently exists, the result would be a prominent structure that would erode an important visual gap by bringing the building noticeably closer to the street corner. As such, the proposal would be overly prominent and would detract from the spacious character and appearance of this part of Caversham Avenue.
7. The proposed works would be in line with the front elevation, and to the same height, as the existing dwelling and adjoining neighbour. However, it would create a noticeably elongated front elevation and roof form that would exacerbate the harm to the spacious character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing house and street scene.
8. I therefore find that the proposal would be contrary to Policies D3 and D6 of the London Plan and Policy 28 of the Local Plan² which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that the design and appearance of development respects its local context. Similarly, the proposed development would be contrary to the Framework³, specifically at paragraph 127, which seeks amongst other things, to ensure new developments are sympathetic to the local character. I have also had regard to the Council's Design Guide⁴ which, for similar reasons, would not support the appeal proposal.
9. The Council has indicated that policies DF1 and S12 of the London Plan are relevant to this proposal. However, they are broader policies relating to the delivery of the Plan, planning obligations and minimising greenhouse gas emissions rather than the stated reasons for refusal. Based on the evidence before me, I have not found the proposal specifically contrary to these policies.

Other Matters

10. The area includes a number of other dwellings with extensions, including side box dormers, that are visible from the street. Whilst this has over time altered the character and appearance of the dwellings and does in some instances reduce the space between buildings, it does not reduce the prevailing spacious feel of the area in the same way the appeal proposal would. They do not therefore lead me to allowing the appeal.
11. I observed some of the examples of extensions and new dwellings in Henley Avenue to which the appellant referred me. I also saw No.505A Gander Green Lane, which has adopted a similar design approach to that which is before me. However, these sites are less visually prominent than the appeal site and have a different context. In particular, I noted that there is a different character and

² Sutton Local Plan (2018)

³ National Planning policy Framework (2019)

⁴ Supplementary Planning Document 14: Urban Design Guide

a greater variety of buildings and styles in the vicinity of No.505A Gander Green Lane than the appeal site. Each appeal proposal is considered on its own merits and the examples provided do not therefore lead me to allowing the appeal.

12. The appellant points to a number of matters such as the absence of harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, the provision of garden areas for both dwellings and conformity to car parking requirements. These would however represent a lack of harm which, by definition, would be incapable of weighing against harm. Accordingly, they would be neutral in any balance.
13. I recognise that the Framework supports the efficient use of land and that the proposal would involve the addition of one new dwelling. However, the Council confirms it is able to demonstrate a 5-year housing supply. Therefore, I could attach only a modest amount of weight to the provision of an additional dwelling. There would be other benefits associated with the provision of a new dwelling but these would be affected by the scale of the proposal and some would be time limited. The weight I could therefore attach to these matters is limited and would, in any event, not outweigh the harm and conflict with the development plan that I have found and to which I ascribe substantial weight.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the proposal would be contrary to the development plan and there are no material considerations that would lead me to a different conclusion. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR