

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2021

by **David Fitzsimon MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/21/3273200

231 Wickham Street, Welling DA16 3LR

- 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 Varkey against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 20/03396/FUL, dated 24 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is 'demolition of existing rear and side extension and proposed new rear, side and dormer extension with alteration to front porch'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by the appellant against the Council which is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a semi-detached dwelling which is located on the corner of Wickham Street and Monkton Road. A single storey extension sits at the side of the appeal dwelling. However, the main body of the appeal dwelling sits comfortably off the corner with Monkton Road which gives a feeling of spaciousness at this junction and makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the local area.
 5. The proposal would replace the existing single storey side extension with a two storey addition. Not only would the proposed two storey extension be substantially taller, it would be noticeably wider, being more than half of the width of the main body of the dwelling. As a result, it would bring two storey built development much closer to the pavement along Monkton Road. Whilst the proposed two storey extension would be set back slightly from the front elevation of the host dwelling with a lower ridge, it would be a somewhat bulky
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addition. The clipped hipped roof arrangement attempts to reduce this effect, but this feature does not respond well to the existing gable end of the host dwelling.

6. The effect would result in an overly dominant and incongruous addition which would not respond well to the scale and form of the host dwelling. Furthermore, it would be highly visible, reducing the sense of space at the junction with Monkton Road and the character and appearance of the street scene would be harmed as a result.
7. The proposal includes alterations to the front porch and the introduction of a rear box dormer. The Council raises no concerns with these elements of the scheme and I have no reason to disagree.
8. The proposal also includes a single storey rear extension which would replace an existing addition. It would span the full width of the original dwelling and would project some 4 metres from its rear elevation. I am mindful that this element would exceed the 3.5m depth and 3.1m height (to eaves with a pitched roof) recommendations of the Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines Note 2 (Extensions to Houses). However, these are guidelines and the rear extension would be a reasonably modest addition, just 1 metre or so deeper than the existing addition. In light of this and bearing in mind the generous depth of the rear garden of the appeal property, I am satisfied that the proposed rear extension would not be a disproportionate addition or amount to over-development.
9. The appellant refers to a range of extensions within the local area, including the two storey side extension at Number 233 Wickham Street which is on the opposite side of the junction with Monkton Road. I do not know the precise planning circumstances behind this development, but it is not a particularly sympathetic addition and it sits prominently within the street scene. To my mind, it only underlines my concerns about the appeal proposal and it is not an example to follow. The other developments which have been highlighted are not directly comparable either in terms of their designs or settings to the appeal proposal which I have considered on its individual merits in any event.
10. I conclude that although the porch, box dormer and rear extension are acceptable, the proposed two storey side extension would not respond well to the scale and form of the host dwelling and it would harm the character and appearance of the street scene within which it sits. In such terms, the proposal conflicts with policy CS01 of the adopted Bexley Core Strategy, policies H9 and ENV39 of the adopted Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan and the Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines Note 2 which collectively promote high quality design that reflects and, where possible, enhances its context. The arguments advanced by the appellant do not outweigh this harm and policy conflict therefore the appeal does not succeed.
11. In view of the acceptability of some elements of the scheme, I have considered the feasibility of a split decision. However, as these are not all physically severable and some are functionally dependent to a large degree, it is not possible for me to do so in this particular case.

David Fitzsimon INSPECTOR