

Appeal Decision

Site visit undertaken on 20 August 2021

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision Date: 06 September 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/21/3274364

87 Queensway, West Wickham, BR4 9DT

- 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 Joe Mourat against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application, ref. DC/21/00265/FULL6, dated 13 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, first floor side extension, insertion of windows into first floor flank elevation and loft conversion incorporating increase in ridge height of existing extension, rear dormer and side rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the first floor side extension, insertion of windows into first floor flank elevation and loft conversion incorporating increase in ridge height of existing extension, rear dormer and side rooflights.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey rear extension, and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension at 87 Queensway, West Wickham, BR4 9DT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/21/00265/FULL6, dated 13 January 2021, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three [3] years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The proposed single storey rear extension shall be constructed in accordance with approved plans:
 - 'Proposed Floor Plans,' By MTN Chislehurst Developments Ltd, Dated 13 Jan 2021; and
 - 'Proposed Elevations,' By MTN of Chislehurst Developments Ltd, Dated 13 Jan 2021.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have taken the description of the proposed development from the Council's Decision Notice as this more accurately reflects the different elements requiring planning consent.
4. The original planning application contains a number of elements that require planning consent such as the first floor side extension, loft conversion and single storey rear extension, amongst others. The Planning Officer Report notes that the main contention is with the first floor rear projection and dormer window to the roof. With this in mind, I have no reason to dispute the opinion of Council officers regarding the acceptability of the other elements of the scheme with this letter being focused purely upon the proposed rear extension.
5. In the applicant's Statement of Case¹, references are made to alterations to the submitted design such as additional windows could be suggested by condition which would seek to alleviate the Council's concerns regarding the overall design. The applicant has not detailed any amendments in this appeal or specifically detailed what is meant by the placement of an additional window. In general, the appeal process is not the appropriate place to evolve the scheme; and the scheme that is considered at appeal ought to be the same one that was considered by the Council. In accordance with the 'Wheatcroft Principles',² it would not be appropriate to consider any suggested amendments within my decision as the acceptance of such would deprive those who should have been consulted on the changed development of the opportunity of such consultation. As such, I will base my decision solely upon the plans that were assessed by the Council during the original planning determination.

Main issues

6. Taking the above into account, the main issue is the effect of the proposed first floor rear roof extension and dormer window upon the character and appearance of the host building and the locality.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is located along Queensway, a carriageway which like others in the locality contains a formally laid out speculative housing development which appears to date from the mid-twentieth century. Both sides of the road contain pairs of semi-detached dwellings with small gaps between dwellings providing glimpses between buildings to trees and greenery beyond. There is a symmetry between the pairs of semi-detached dwellings which typically have the same characteristics and design elements with large feature gables with mock timber Tudor style boarding, rendered facades, and a smaller rear projection with separate hipped roof which is set back from the main feature gable and leads onto a small porch with hipped roof.
8. The similar designs found throughout the estate reinforce a uniformity and authenticity which creates a formal picturesque townscape which along with

¹ Annotated Planning Officer Report, Page 7

² Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE [JPL 1982 P37]

vegetated front gardens and street trees give a spacious, leafy and distinctive character. The front and rear roof planes are uncluttered and authentic to their architectural integrity with unaltered roof planes with chimney stacks being a dominant characteristic of the street scene. To the rear the leafy character continues with well vegetated rear gardens, and whilst some dwellings have extended the rear wing from the original designs, the historic roof form and subservience of the rear extension to the main feature gable remains intact.

9. The appeal site displays a number of positive qualities which are experienced within the street scene, being one half of the characteristic semi-detached dwellings and containing many of the important design elements and original roof forms which reinforce the local character and distinctiveness of the area. Whilst the appeal dwelling has increased the size of the rear/side addition, the projection remains subservient to the main gable. I acknowledge the applicant's Statement of Case (SoC) that there are also large box dormer extensions erected nearby.³ Whilst it has not been made clear the circumstances behind these additions, to me they are exceptions rather than reflecting a common or positive characteristic of the locality.
10. In undertaking extensions to buildings, the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan 2019 (LP) Policy 6 seeks to ensure that residential extensions satisfy criteria relating to the scale, and form of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, with dormer windows needing to be of a size and design appropriate to the roofscape and sited away from prominent roof pitches. Additionally, LP Policy 37 contains a number of design criterion which seeks that the general design of development be of a high standard and that alterations are compatible with the scale, proportion, form and character of the locality; and positively contributes to the existing street scene, amongst others.
11. With regards to the proposed rear extension, the small rear/side extension would be increased in height so that the ridge was elongated over the smaller side extension, encapsulating this smaller rear extension into the main body of the roof form. When seen in conjunction with the remaining half of the semi-detached dwelling, the appeal site would have an overly bulky and domineering appearance which would be top-heavy in massing and visual bulk which would give rise to large areas of blank facades and erode positive elements within the street scene such as the chimney stacks and subservience of smaller rear extensions to the main gable. I note comments that the applicant does not believe there is harm caused because the proposal is largely within the private realm, however LP Policy 6 or 37 do not limit the assessment of character and appearance to what can be purely experienced from the public realm.
12. Whilst there are examples as highlighted previously further along the street of large box dormer extensions, they do illustrate how cluttered and bulky the appearance of such additions are to the roof form. I am not of the opinion that such alterations are part of the positive characteristics and appearance of this particular street scene and the presence of these

³ 94 Queensway; 17, 19 & 51 Birch Tree Avenue

extensions does not provide adequate justification for further detrimental elements to be situated on the appeal building.

13. Taken as a whole, and in conclusion of this matter, the proposed rear alterations to the 1st floor extension would cause unacceptable detriment towards the architectural authenticity and integrity of the existing building and the character and appearance of the surrounding locality. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to the LP Policies 6 and 37 as described previously.

Other Matters

14. The proposal includes a single storey rear extension. The extension is modest in size and lightweight in design that is generally proportionate to the form and composition of the appeal building. I therefore find no harm in respect of this element of the proposal and I note the Council raised no objection in this regard either. The applicant requests that a split decision be considered. As the single storey rear extension is both physically and functionally severable, I consider a split decision would be a logical outcome. Whilst I note that the front first floor extension is another element not in dispute with the Council, it is physically part of the overall side and rear extension and would not be sufficiently physically or functionally severable. That said, the single storey rear extension is compliant with LP Policies 6 and 37 as described previously.

Conclusion and Conditions

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should succeed in relation to the single storey rear addition. However, in relation to the remaining elements, the appeal should be dismissed.
16. In respect of the single storey rear extension it is necessary to have the standard conditions of the standard time limit for the avoidance of doubt; and the extension to be constructed in accordance with the approved plans is also necessary as this provides certainty to the scheme which has been approved.

J Somers

INSPECTOR