



Appeal Decision

Site visit made 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/21/3273873

121 Birch Tree Avenue, West Wickham, BR4 9EQ

- 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 Jerry Slegrova against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/20/04904/FULL6, dated 1 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is a side dormer extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of the development from the Council's Decision Notice as this more accurately describes the elements which require planning consent. The Council's description of development is also reflected on the applicant's appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located along Birch Tree Avenue, which forms one of a number of streets in the local area that contains formally laid out speculative housing which appears to date from the mid-twentieth century. Both sides of Birch Tree Avenue contain semi-detached dwellings which have a symmetry in their placement and design elements which have an Arts and Crafts inspired style. Each of the pair of semi-detached dwellings contain a large feature gable between both semi-detached dwellings with mock Tudor-style boarding to the gable with two storey bow windows to the front. The dwellings along Birch Tree Avenue have a regimented pattern of development with similar placement of dwellings with large front gardens, visual gaps in between properties with a shared driveway which leads to the rear garden. There is evidence of small extensions to the rear of dwellings along the street, however these remain subservient to the dwellings where the dominant gable end have an uncluttered appearance which is a positive characteristic of the locality.
5. The use of traditional materials such as timber, brick, and clay roof tiles along with the similar designs reinforce an architectural integrity, uniformity and authenticity which creates a formal picturesque townscape which along with vegetated front gardens and street trees gives a leafy and distinctive character.

The majority of front roof planes along this section of Birch Tree Avenue are uncluttered and authentic to their architectural integrity with unaltered roof planes being the dominant characteristic of the street scene.

6. The appeal site displays a number of positive qualities which are experienced within the street scene, being one 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.
7. In undertaking extensions to the rooves of 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.
8. The proposed dormer roof extension would be large and would almost remove the entirety of the existing pitched roof of the dwelling. The applicant's Statement of Case (SoC) notes that there are examples¹ along the street of similar dormer roof forms which in the applicant's opinion would set a precedence for the proposed development. I note however that according to both parties that some of the dormer roof extensions are historic and some do not benefit from planning consent, or have been undertaken before the recent change of policy position with the LP being adopted relatively recently in 2019.
9. Assessing the character and appearance of the street scene on my site visit, it was evident that considering the street scene as a whole, the dormer roof extensions that have been constructed give a haphazard, cluttered and discordant appearance within the street scene that interferes with the inherent symmetry of the street which is a positive characteristic. I am therefore not of the same opinion as the applicant's SoC that the limited number of dormer roof extensions placed on prominent roof pitches are part of the inherent character of the locality. It is clear to me that the current policy position as outlined in LP Policies 6 and 37 place an emphasis on subservience, scale, massing and form where the impact to prominent roof forms are an inherent consideration for the placement of dormer roof extensions. The existing dormer roof extensions along the street do however illustrate how dominant these extensions are to the existing building and roof form which in turn interferes with the character and appearance of the street scene.
10. I am therefore not of the opinion that such alterations where an identical scheme is proposed at the appeal building are part of the positive characteristics and appearance of this particular street scene. The presence of these extensions does not provide adequate justification for further detrimental elements to be situated on the appeal building.
11. Taken as a whole, and in conclusion of this matter, the proposed dormer roof extension would cause unacceptable detriment towards the architectural authenticity and integrity of the existing building and cause harm towards the

¹ Numbers 3, 5, 7, 9, 34, 27, 37, 38, 39, 49, 75, 113, 137, 139, 132, 128, 120, 100, 102, 98, 84, 66, 64, 60, 52, 49 Birch Tree Avenue.

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

12. I note comments in the Applicant's SoC with regards to the Council's application and decision making process which was unduly prolonged and caused stress to the applicant as well as the applicant feeling that they have been treated differently as a result of lack of enforcement for other dormer roof extensions. The lack of enforcement action does not mean that the development is acceptable when assessed against the policies of the development plan. Whilst I sympathise with the applicant for the delayed and outdrawn process of their application, I have assessed the application on its merits which has shown to be contrary to the policies of the development plan.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers
INSPECTOR