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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2021

**by J D Westbrook BSc(hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 25 September 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/21/3275018**  
**31 Preston Drive, BEXLEYHEATH, DA7 4UF**

- 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 Steve Wright against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
  - The application Ref 21/00455/FUL, dated 11 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2021.
  - The development proposed is the construction of a first-floor side extension and two-storey rear extension.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a first-floor side extension and two-storey rear extension at 31 Preston Drive, BEXLEYHEATH, DA7 4UF, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00455/FUL, dated 11 February 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 090221/1, 090221/2, 090221/3, 090221/4, 090221/5, Site Location Plan.
  - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the area around Preston Drive.

## Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached house situated on the western side of Preston Drive. It currently has a single-storey side extension with wrap-around porch/canopy to the front. It also has a single-storey rear extension. The proposed development would involve the construction of a first-floor addition above the current side extension to create a two-storey element, which would continue for a further 3 metres to the side and rear of the house as a two-storey extension. A single-storey element would remain between this and the side boundary with the adjoining No 29.

4. Policy ENV39 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan, 2004, (UDP) indicates that the Council will seek to ensure that all new developments, including alterations and extensions, are satisfactorily located, and are of a high standard of design and layout. In determining applications for development, the Council will consider, amongst other things, the extent to which the proposal is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and whether it would adversely affect the street scene by reason of scale, massing, height, elevational treatment or materials.
5. Policy H9 of the UDP indicates that the siting, design and external appearance of an extension should be compatible with the character of the existing building and adjacent buildings.
6. The Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines (2004) (DDCG), which accompanies the UDP, indicates that two-storey side or first-floor extensions over existing accommodation should be designed to be subordinate to the main dwelling. It goes on to indicate that, ideally, this should incorporate a set-back of the front elevation of the extension, in which case the roof plane of the extension should respect that of the original house, thereby lowering the ridge-line.
7. The Council contends that the proposed side extension by reason of its lack of first-floor set back and lack of lowered ridge line would result in the introduction of an unsympathetic and unbalanced addition to the dwelling house by reason of its design, scale and massing, which would not appear subservient to the original property. This would be detrimental to the character of the dwelling house and the wider street scene.
8. The appellant contends that there are a significant number of two-storey side extensions to houses on Preston Drive, many of which have been granted permission in recent years, and many of which do not exhibit either set-back of the front elevation or set-down of the roof ridge. The Council acknowledges that there are examples where permission was granted since before the UDP was adopted, or in order to achieve balance between pairs of houses, or just a 'rogue' decision.
9. From my site visit to the area, it would appear that Preston Drive is characterised by semi-detached houses of a basically similar design but with many examples of extensions that result in 'imbalance' of pairs, along with some hip-to-gable alterations; two-storey side extensions that have flat roofs or shallow, front pitched roofs; and terracing effects caused by adjacent two-storey side extensions. There is great variety along the road, and balance between a pair of houses, for whatever reason, is not a clearly defining feature.
10. The proposed extension at No 31 would not be set back from the front elevation of the house and the roof ridge would continue the existing. Materials would match those of the existing building. On this basis, I consider that the proposed side extension would be sympathetic to the design and external appearance of the host property and would not appear out of character within the streetscene along the rest of the road. Whilst it may remain an ideal to have side extensions with a front set-back and a resulting set-down roof ridge, in this instance, and in the context of the surrounding area, I find that proposed extension would be compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and would not adversely affect the street scene.

11. In conclusion, I find that the proposed side extension at No 31 would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the host property or to the surrounding area of Preston Drive, and that it would not, therefore, conflict with Policies ENV39 or H9 of the UDP.

**Conditions**

12. I have attached a condition relating to plans because it is necessary that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I have attached a further condition relating to materials in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

*J D Westbrook*

INSPECTOR