
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

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/21/3273988

19 Sydney Road Sidcup Kent DA14 6RA

- 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 Christopher Mills against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 20/03154/FUL, dated 3 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a part single-storey and part two-storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the extension on the character and appearance of the area around Sydney Road.

Reasons

3. No 19 is a semi-detached house situated on the eastern side of Sydney Road. It has an attached garage and a full-width single-storey extension to the rear of the main house. The appeal property is part of a group of 4 semi-detached dwellings of similar design and balanced appearance, comprising Nos 13 - 19. Immediately to the south of the appeal property is a sports complex. To the north of No 13 Sydney Road is another small group of 6 semi-detached dwellings, also of similar design and balanced appearance. On the western side of the road, opposite to the appeal property is a row of detached and semi-detached houses of varied design.
4. The proposed development would involve the construction of a large, two-storey side extension with a staggered side elevation to reflect the fact that the side boundary with the sports club narrows from the front to the rear of the property. The side extension would also project around 3.5 metres beyond the main rear elevation of the house. Between the two-storey element and the boundary with the adjoining No 17 would be a single-storey rear extension projecting around 4.5 metres beyond the rear elevation.
5. 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.

6. 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.
7. The Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines (2004) (DDCG), which accompanies the UDP, indicates that two-storey side extensions 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.
8. The Council contends that the proposal, and in particular the two-storey side extension, by virtue of its design and combined scale and massing would constitute an inappropriate and discordant overdevelopment which would be harmful to the appearance of the host dwelling and out of character with the surrounding neighbourhood.
9. The appellant contends that there are many examples of similar extensions on the nearby Appledore Crescent, and that he has a need to extend his house for family reasons.
10. In this case, I note that the two pairs of semi-detached houses of which No 19 forms a part are balanced and symmetrical in basic design. Similarly, the group of three pairs of semi-detached houses formed by Nos 1 – 11 is also balanced and symmetrical in design and appearance. This is, therefore, a characteristic feature of all of the houses on the eastern side of Sydney Road between its junction with Main Road and the sports complex to the south of the appeal property. In the light of this, an extension to any of these pairs of semi-detached houses would result in imbalance, affecting the appearance of the immediate area. Whilst this need not necessarily, in itself, be a reason to refuse permission for an extension, I consider that it is an indication of the need for any such extension to be a discreet and subtle feature in the street scene in order to protect the character and appearance of its surroundings.
11. The proposed extension at No 19, by virtue of both its significant width in relation to the width of the existing house, and also its situation adjacent to the open area of the sports complex, would appear as a dominant feature, prominent in the street scene. By virtue of its scale and massing, exacerbated by the lack of set-back from the front elevation and consequent lack of set-down from the roof ridge, it would not appear as subordinate to the host property, and it would be harmful to the prevailing character and appearance of the rows of houses of which it forms a part.
12. I note the comments of the appellant regarding extensions to properties along Appledore Crescent, but the circumstances along that road are different and cannot be viewed as a precedent for this current proposal. I have some sympathy with the appellant in his desire to extend his property in order to better accommodate his family. However, I am not convinced that this scheme as submitted is the only solution to the issue.

13. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension would be harmful to the appearance of the host property and the adjacent dwellings, and to the character and appearance of its setting along Sydney Road. It would, on this basis, conflict with policies ENV39 and H9 of the UDP, and with guidance in the DDCG. Accordingly, I dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR