



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 28 October 2021

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08/11/2021

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/21/3270203

8 Crown Road, Chelsfield, Kent BR6 6JN

- 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 Roy Barnard against the decision of London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/20/01186/FULL1, dated 25 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'single storey rear extension, two storey side extension, conversion of property into two flats (two-bedroomed)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the period since the appeal was submitted, the Government has published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in July 2021. The London Plan 2021 (LP) has also been published during that period. The Council has referred to policies and minimum space standards in the LP and the Mayor of London's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (2016) (SPG) within its Statement of Case and copies of the specific policies that the Council considers are relevant to the appeal have been provided. Both parties have been provided with an opportunity to comment on these matters and I have taken any comments received into account as part of my assessment.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - (i) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - (ii) Whether the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers of the development with particular regard to levels of internal and external space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Crown Road is characterised by detached and semi-detached dwellings in an eclectic mix of architectural styles. There are generally gaps between neighbouring dwellings, although there are several instances where dwellings sit close to or abut their side boundaries. Even so, the general spacing and quality of design of dwellings gives Crown Road a pleasant residential character and appearance. The neighbouring semi-detached dwelling at No 10 Crown

Road has a side extension which is set away from the side boundary and set back from the front elevation. These factors ensure that this neighbouring extension appears subservient and that the forwardmost elevation retains a strong degree of symmetry with the appeal dwelling. As a result, this pair of semi-detached dwellings make a positive contribution to the street scene.

5. I acknowledge that the proposal would result in the loss of a family dwelling. The two-storey side extension would also marginally breach the minimum 1.0 metre side space requirements under Policy 8 of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (2019) (BLP). Even so, I am not convinced by the evidence before me or from what I saw on site that these matters alone would necessarily be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
6. However, the front elevation of the two-storey side extension would sit flush with the forwardmost part of the host building. In combination with the height and width of the extension, breaching the minimum side space requirement, this would elongate the front elevation of the building and would appear as a bland and bulky addition. This would also unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings, detracting from their appearance and that of the street scene.
7. I conclude, the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. In that regard it would conflict with the design requirements of Policies 4 (Housing Design), 8 (Side Space) and 37 (General Design of Development) of the BLP and Policies D3 (Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach), D4 (Delivering good design) and D6 (Housing quality and standards) of the LP and the Framework.

Living conditions for future occupiers

8. Table 3.1 under Policy D6 (Housing Quality and standards) of the LP sets out amongst other things that the minimum gross internal floor area for a two-bedroomed dwelling provided over a single storey is 61 square metres (sq m). Policy D6 also requires that a dwelling with two or more bedspaces must have at least one double (or twin) bedroom that is at least 2.75 metres (m) wide with a minimum floor area of 11.5sq m. These requirements correlate with the Government's Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015) to which the SPG also refers.
9. The evidence before me indicates that the two flats would have internal floor areas of only 48.5 sq m and 43.6 sq m respectively and that neither of the flats would have a double (or twin) bedroom meeting the minimum specified dimensions in the LP. Therefore, the proposal would not meet the minimum local or nationally described space standards. The deficiencies in internal space are compounded by the consequential internal layout. For example, the levels of daylight and means of outlook to the lounge areas would be somewhat compromised given their central position within the flats set away from the nearest windows.
10. Given that access to the rear would be retained to the side of the flats, it is feasible that arrangements could be made to provide suitable private outside space, cycle and refuse facilities for future occupants. However, this does not overcome the internal space deficiencies identified above.
11. I conclude, the development would not provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers of the development with particular regard to levels of internal

space. In that regard the proposal would conflict with the requirements for developments to provide adequately sized rooms with comfortable and functional layouts in Policies 4, and 37 of the BLP and Policy D6 (Housing quality and standards) of the LP. The proposal would also conflict with Paragraph 130 of the Framework which amongst other things requires that developments function well and create places with a high standard of amenity for future users.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. The Council acknowledges that it cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Paragraph 11d of the Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged and permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole.
13. The development would result in the net addition of a single residential unit over the existing number of dwellings on the site. In the context of the Government objective to significantly boost the delivery of housing and the support in the LP for the intensification and greater provision of housing, the proposal would make a modest but important contribution towards the provision of housing in the area and add to the mix of property types in the street. I also attach positive weight to the site's accessible location within close range of services and facilities as well as the potential for some modest economic benefits through the conversion works and the expenditure in the area by future occupants.
14. However, the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area and would not provide suitable living conditions for future occupants. In these regards the development would conflict with the development plan and national policy. Taken together, these are matters which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the modest benefits of the proposal when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole.
15. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR