The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 12 October 2021 by Max Webb

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/21/3278398
206 Farmfield Road, Bromley BR1 4NP

- 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 Bharadia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
- The application Ref DC/21/121215, dated 7 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 May 2021.
- The development proposed is a single storey side extension and new front door re-located to the front elevation.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. On 20 July 2021 the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). I have had regard to this as a material consideration however, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council and the appellant have both been given opportunity to comment on the relevant revisions to the Framework affecting this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property is located at the end of a terrace, forming a symmetrical pair with the opposing end terrace property, 180 Farmfield Road. This pair is situated at the entrance to a cul-de-sac, with both properties leaving a reasonable gap to the road, which provides an open character to the symmetrically designed cul-de-sac, resulting in an attractive feature for the area.

6. The proposed extension would project considerably to the side and, whilst set back slightly from the front elevation, would be almost in line with the rear

elevation. The proposed ridge height of the extension would be just below the existing windows in the side elevation of the host dwelling. Figure 4.15 of the SPD[1] presents an example of an acceptable side extension that is set in from both the front and rear elevations with a clearly subservient ridge height, and this is in contrast to the appeal proposal. The proposal would therefore not conform with the design guidelines set out in the SPD.

7. The proposal would significantly reduce the existing gap to the road. Despite being situated on a reasonably large plot, the side extension would interrupt the symmetrical gap between the pair of properties at the entrance to the cul-de-sac and thus have a disruptive effect on this distinctive feature. Although it appears No.180 has been granted a lawful development certificate for a hip-to-gable roof alteration and rear dormer, the gap that forms a key part of the symmetry would not be reduced. Therefore, this development would not interrupt the symmetry of the two properties to the same extent as the appeal proposal. Whilst the character of an area may change over time, such as with the alterations at No.180, this does not justify development that would specifically harm this character.

8. Other properties in the area, particularly 170 Farmfield Road and 88 Valeswood Road, have also been altered and modified. No.170 has a side extension that is smaller than the appeal proposal and the symmetrical gap to the road with the opposing property is less important than at the appeal site. No.88 is not part of a pair that form a clear symmetrical feature to the same extent as the appeal site. It also appears from submitted documents that the development at 46 Horncastle Road, whilst a side extension of substantial overall size, would be better suited to that dwelling and would be less disruptive to the street scene than the appeal proposal. The developments at No.170, No.88 and No.46 are therefore not significantly comparable to the appeal development.

9. Overall, the side extension would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. It would thus conflict with Strategic Objective 10 and Policies 5 and 15 of the Core Strategy[2], which together seek to ensure development is sensitive and appropriate to local distinctiveness. It would also not comply with Policy 30 and 31 of the DMP[3], which together aim to ensure alterations and extensions respect or complement architectural characteristics that contribute to local distinctiveness. Although the Core Strategy and DMP are older documents, weight should still be prescribed to policy that is in accordance with the Framework. Despite their age, the referenced policies in these documents remain in accord with the Framework, and therefore significant weight has been given to them.

10. The development would likewise go against the aims of the SPD, which sets out how side extensions should not be intrusive to the street scene and should not unbalance a symmetrical pair. It would also be contrary to Paragraph 126 of the Framework, which outlines the importance of high-quality buildings and places.

[1] Lewisham Local Plan Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2019)
[2] Lewisham Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2011)
[3] Lewisham Local Development Framework Development Management Local Plan (2014)

Other Matters

11. Whilst a different application referenced the possibility of an extension on site, and a previous appeal decision may have found a rear extension acceptable, the proposed side extension is a different development than that which was considered in these cases and is therefore not comparable. Each development should be considered on its individual merits, and as has been outlined above, the proposed side extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. The suggestion that the Council has been overly influenced by previous applications and appeal decisions does not alter the substantial planning considerations I have had regard to in this appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above and having had regard to the Development Plan as a whole, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Max Webb

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR