
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 7 December 2021 by S Witherley CIHCM MRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/21/3281206

31 Forest Ridge, Keston BR2 6EG

- 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 & Mrs D Stevens against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/21/01406/FULL6, dated 21 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 June 2021.
 - The development proposed on the application form is: First floor side extensions. Loft conversion with front and rear dormers, Juliet balconies and front eyebrow window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the first-floor side extensions, loft conversion with front and rear dormers, Juliet balconies and front eyebrow window, at 31 Forest Ridge, Keston, BR2 6EG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/21/01406/FULL6, dated 21 March 2021, 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:
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development, hereby permitted, shall match those used in the existing building.

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.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal on 1) the character and appearance of the appeal property and whether it would preserve or enhance the Keston Park Conservation Area (CA) in which it sits, and 2) the effect of the proposal on nearby trees.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. No. 31 is a detached two storey hipped roof dwelling with single storey additions at either side which sit close to the shared boundaries. To the front is a spacious driveway set within a mature and verdant streetscape. To the rear is a large garden which incorporates a wooded area set back from a lawned and landscaped garden.
5. The site is located in the CA. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Keston Park Conservation Area, (2002), states the significance of the area is derived from the historical connection with the Holwood House Estate and the way this was incorporated by the Rogers Family into a high-quality built development. This allowed the development of low density, large and individually designed dwellings, set within the mature woodland landscape setting of the park.
6. From my own observations, I consider the significance of the CA, as it relates to this appeal site, derives indeed from the spacious and verdant plots with properties generously recessed back from the highway. Properties are typically traditional in character and appearance with a strong influence of the arts and crafts movements with more formalised and symmetrical neo – classical designs. However, given each property has been individually designed, there is a wide variety in terms of design and the architectural detailing with this variability also apparent in the individual siting and spatial separation between properties. It is these factors combined that I consider makes a positive contribution to this part of the CA and the CA as a whole.
7. The proposal consists of a number of elements including development above the existing ground floor side extensions. They would each feature a barn hip roof, alternatively known as a half hipped or jerkinhead roof profile and include a dormer window to the front and rear.
8. The existing hipped roof of the main dwelling would also be altered to a half-hipped and would incorporate an eyebrow window at the front and, at the rear, two dormer windows with Juliet balconies. Materials throughout would match that of the existing which consist of timber cladding and clay roof tiles.
9. The proposed side extensions along with the main roof would feature a half-hipped roof with the side additions set down and back from the main roof and front elevation of the property. The proposed dormer windows would not exceed beyond the respective ridge height and as a result of their design and use of similar materials would appear well matched and subordinate within this part of the proposed roof scape, particularly when viewed in combination with the overall character and appearance of the proposed modified roof profile of the main dwelling.
10. Whilst the proposed side additions and modifications to the main roof profile would result in an overall increase to the mass of the dwelling, given that the proposed ridge height of the side additions would be lower than the ridge height of the main dwelling and, as the side additions would not exceed the existing footprint at ground floor, with a substantial set back from the front elevation, they would remain subsidiary in scale to the original dwelling thus ensuring the overall developed dwelling does not appear bulky or top heavy and, that it remains proportionate within its plot and respects and maintains the existing spacious character of the area.

11. This aligns with both the guidance contained in the SPG, which seeks side extensions to be subsidiary in scale to the original dwelling and which is marked by a lower roof ridge height, and also aligns with the requirements of Policy 8 of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (2019) (BLP), which seeks to ensure proposals of two or more storeys in height retain a minimum of 1 metres space from the side boundary of the site for the full height and length of the building. As the proposal does not exceed beyond the existing footprint at ground floor and prevents a cramped appearance and unrelated terracing from occurring, it is considered that the proposal complies with the fundamental aims of this Policy requirement.
12. The design, scale and form of the proposed dormers proposed on the rear roof slope of the main dwelling would appear proportionate in size to the resulting roofscapes and, this along with the angle of the proposed roof, which matches that of the main dwelling, results in a development appearing proportionate and symmetrical, when viewed as a whole.
13. The proposed eyebrow window would match the existing 'eyebrow' features that spring from the eaves level above the current first floor windows on the front elevation, thereby adopting the architectural features of the original house. Furthermore, as the proposed side extensions would appear subordinate for the reason mentioned above, the addition of this eyebrow window at this location would appear in keeping with the original proportions and symmetry of the overall proposed development. I also consider the design of the eyebrow window is somewhat reminiscent of the arts and crafts movement and this combined with the proposed materials would ensure that the alterations would blend in well with the existing features and not detract from the architectural integrity of the original dwelling, the surrounding properties or the CA.
14. Furthermore, the proposal would maintain the high spatial standards of separation between buildings as currently exists and would not have a harmful impact on the verdant feel of the CA.
15. For the reasons above, I conclude that proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area and would have a neutral effect on the CA thereby preserving its character and appearance. I find that there is no conflict with Policies 6, 8, 37, 41 of the BLP for the reasons outlined above and which collectively seek to ensure residential extensions respect or complement the scale, form and materials of the host and the surrounding area, and to positively contribute to the street scene, respecting or maintaining the existing space or gaps between buildings and which seek dormer windows to be of a size and design appropriate to the roofscape and, seeks proposals to respect existing landscape or other features that contribute to the character, appearance or historic value of the area.

Trees

16. The Council is concerned that the proposal would lead to the pruning and felling of trees within the area. Despite its concerns no evidence has been submitted which indicates the specific trees that would require pruning or felling. An unsubstantiated concern of this nature is not sufficient grounds to refuse the proposal and I am satisfied that the proposal would not increase the need for pruning or felling, beyond standard maintenance that may be required at present. I find the proposal would achieve the aims as set out in the SPG which requires all new developments to conform with the highly dispersed and

wooded character of the CA. Maintaining its mature woodland landscape is deemed to be essential to maintaining the CAs character and appearance.

17. I therefore find no conflict with Policies 43 and 73 of the BLP, which seek to protect trees of environmental importance and protect those of importance that are located in a CA.

Conditions

18. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is in the interest of certainty. A condition is necessary for the materials to match those that are used in the existing property in order maintain the character and appearance of property and the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

S Witherley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall allow the appeal, subject to the conditions set out.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR