
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 26 October 2021 by S Witherley CIHCM MRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/21/3278439

22 Priory Avenue, Petts Wood, Orpington BR5 1JF

- 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 Mark Plummer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/21/01581/FULL6, dated 29 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2021.
 - The development proposed on the application form is: Two storey front extension and garage enlargement.
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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.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal on the appeal property and the surrounding area including the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC) in which it sits.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. No. 22 is a two-storey semi-detached property located within the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC). The area surrounding No. 22 is characterised by large and spacious two storey semi-detached and detached properties including, in the immediate area, bungalows. Similarities can be seen throughout the street scape in the use of building materials, regular buildings lines, which are set back from spacious front gardens and tree lined pavements. Collectively, these features make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the immediate area and that of the wider ASRC.
5. No. 22 along with its adjoining neighbour features brick detailing at ground floor with white-painted rendered at first floor with Mock-Tudor timber detailing upon a steeply pitched forward projecting gable. This dominant and striking gable front sits forward of the main hipped roof which projects out at the side, resulting in a staggered and spacious frontage. Given that neither pair of semi-detached properties appear to have been modified at roof level, this results in the pair of semi-detached appearing visually well balanced.

6. The proposal would provide a new entrance at ground floor and an enlargement to an existing bedroom at the front of the dwelling at first floor. The proposed first floor extension would create an additional front gable which would be of a slightly smaller scale to that of the existing gable front. Despite it being of similar design, the addition of a second gable adjacent to the existing one would disrupt the balance and uniformity of the existing by introducing an odd and juxtaposed feature which would create an imbalance to the existing symmetry of this pair of semi-detached properties. Moreover, as the new ridge of the proposed gable would be higher than the current roof plane of the hipped roof it would look extremely odd when viewed on approach from street level where the awkward combination of roof heights would be apparent. Setting aside arguments relating to loss of symmetry, the awkward relationship between the gable roof of the extension and the hipped roof of the original dwelling would be harmful, of itself.
7. The proposal at ground floor would infill the gap between the dwelling and that of the linked garage, thus removing the staggered frontage which is a defining feature of this dwelling and its neighbour. Furthermore, the proposed new entrance would, as a result of its siting, further encroach into the front garden space and erode the sense of spaciousness at the front of the property. Moreover, as the majority of other entrances appear to be off centre or at the side of properties, the porch would appear as an incongruous feature upon this front facade.
8. The proposal would therefore detract and undermine the character, rhythm, symmetry and spatial standards of the original dwelling, the street scape and that of the wider ARSC in which it is located.
9. I observed at the time of my site visit examples throughout parts of Priory Avenue where similar types of development had occurred, and pairs of semi-detached properties had been developed at one side and not the other.
10. The Council has stated a number of those were granted approval prior to the adoption of the Bromley Local Plan (BLP) 2019. The examples relating to No. 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 47 49, 51 and 53 Priory Avenue relate to alterations to matching pairs of semi-detached properties. In the absence of full plans or relevant officer reports I cannot be certain that the detailed considerations surrounding their approval or the policies that they were assessed against were comparable to the details before me or policies contained in the BLP 2019. Nevertheless, these examples are relatively few in number and do not dominate the streetscape to a point where the symmetry between pairs of semi-detached properties is no longer an established or attractive feature. That is particularly the case in the run of semi-detached properties on the same side of the road as the appeal property, down to No. 42, where a high degree of symmetry remains. Therefore, notwithstanding historical alterations elsewhere, the symmetry and design of the appeal property and its neighbour remains an attractive feature that contributes positively to the character of the streetscape.
11. The development cited at No. 21a and 13 Priory Avenue appear to relate to side extensions that are set back from the principal elevations. In both these examples the existing house design and site context appears somewhat different to the appeal proposal before me. Whilst I have not been provided with the full details or the circumstances around the approval of the cases, I do

not consider the appeal before me is in any way comparable with those aforementioned.

12. Whilst reference has been made to an appeal at No. 30 Priory Avenue, from the limited details provided, the design was somewhat different to that proposed in this instance, particularly the roof arrangement where the hipped end of the extension would appear to tie in with the hip of the original roof, unlike the proposed and harmful arrangement described above. I recognise that the Inspector accepted that the loss of symmetry was acceptable in that instance. Nonetheless, for the reasons given above, the symmetry on evidence at the appeal site is an attractive feature of the street. Having regard to that and the design differences between the schemes I am not bound by the previous decision relating to No. 30. In addition, the proposal was allowed by the Inspector in 2018, this predates the 2019 BLP and, as noted, I cannot be certain that the policy requirements then are comparable with the requirements of the 2019 BLP.
13. Whilst the appellant has cited a number of other examples of planning approvals and appeals throughout the wider ASRC, I acknowledge that this encompasses a large area with a variety of different house types and designs. For these reasons I do not consider that the proposals cited elsewhere in the ASRC are comparable given the appeal before me given the very different street scrapes in which each sit.
14. Overall, whilst I recognise that a number of properties in the wider area have been altered, the symmetry that exists between the appeal property and its neighbour remains an attractive and positive feature. I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property itself and the surrounding area including the ASRC in which it sits. This would be contrary to the aims of Policies 6, 37 and 44 of the Bromley Local Plan 2019 which, amongst other things, seek to achieve a high standard of design that respects or complements the host dwelling, is compatible with the surrounding area and enhances and strengthens the special and distinctive qualities of the ASRC.

Conclusion

15. The proposal conflicts with the most relevant policies in an up-to-date development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Witherley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. 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 dismiss the appeal.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR