

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2022

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st February 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/D5120/D/21/3279550

Land at 4 Carlton Road, Erith DA8 1DW

- 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 A Alahakone against the decision of the London Borough of Bexley Council.
 - The application (reference 21/01183/FUL, dated 11 April 2021) was refused by notice dated 22 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as “double storey side and rear and single side” extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary points

2. Notwithstanding the description of the application that was given in the application form, the nature of the proposal can more clearly be expressed as set out in the decision notice and appeal form, as the construction of a part one-storey and part two-storey side and rear extension incorporating a covered way to the side and formation of rooms in the roofspace.

Main issue

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the residential amenities of neighbours (whether unacceptable harm would be caused by overbearing appearance or overshadowing).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in a busy built up part of south London, not far from the River Thames. The immediate surroundings are primarily residential in character but the location is quite urban. Carlton Road is a busy route, which is also a bus route, that joins the A220 Bexley Road at a small roundabout, close to the appeal site frontage.
5. The house at number 4 Carlton Road is set back from the highway, behind a fenced private courtyard that is used for parking cars, but nevertheless it has a generous back garden by comparison with its closest neighbours. It is a substantial building, with an imposing two-storey gable facing the road, flanked

by single-storey wings on each side. The main elevation is traditional in style, incorporating some eclectic architectural features, including false timberwork and a rounded bay window. The design incorporates a mixed palette of materials and has some visual interest, though it is not architecturally outstanding.

6. The houses to the west, along Carlton Road are sited nearer to the road (at an angle) and as a result the front garden at number 4 is dominated by the side wall of the neighbouring house. Similarly, the back garden of number 6 is located alongside the house on the appeal site. Number 2 Carlton Road, at the road junction to the east, faces the roundabout and is sited at an angle to both roads, with only a very small triangular back garden. Further to the north-west, the houses in Vicarage Road have gardens that also back on to part of the side boundary of the appeal site.
7. It is now proposed to add substantial extensions to the property, on both sides and at the rear of the existing house.
8. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in July 2021) emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, which includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation.
9. "Saved" Policies ENV39, H3, H7 and H9 in the 'Bexley Council Unitary Development Plan' (adopted in April 2004) lay a specific emphasis on the need for good design, including in respect of "residential development consisting of extensions and alterations" (Policy H9). The 'London Borough of Bexley Core Strategy' (which was adopted in February 2012) and 'The London Plan' likewise seek to encourage high standards of design.
10. Section 2 of the Council's 'Design and Development Control Guidelines' underpins the Development Plan Policies, with specific guidance on "extensions to houses".
11. The proposed extensions would create a two-storey side extension adjacent to the side boundary with number 6 Carlton Road and the rear boundary of number 21 Vicarage Road. The back gardens of these two houses lie approximately to the north-west of the appeal site and the two-storey extension would present a large expanse of brickwork as a side wall that would dominate the adjoining gardens and have a major impact on the outlook from the homes themselves. Being located to the south-east of the neighbouring gardens, the new side wall would also significantly overshadow them.
12. The proposed extension to the north-east part of the existing house, would be of single-storey construction but it would extend much further along the angled rear boundary of number 2 Carlton Road. Although that property has a large front garden, adjacent to the roundabout and the two main roads, the rear private garden is small in size and awkwardly shaped. The proposed extension would be intrusive and overly dominant in its context and would, again, materially harm the neighbours' living conditions.

13. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is “sustainable” in planning terms, and the proposed development would make useful additions to the existing house. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the residential amenities of neighbours outweighs the benefits of the project.
14. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR