The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

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

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPl MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/21/3275775
97 Kingsway, Petts Wood, Orpington BR5 1PW

- 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 Oliver Murray against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
- The application Ref DC/21/00379/FULL6, dated 21 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2021.
- The development proposed on the application form is: C3 Residential dwelling - Loft conversion including hip to gable, and front roof lights.

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.

Applications for costs

3. An application for costs was made by Mr Oliver Murray against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley. This application is attached as a separate decision.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 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

5. No. 97 is a semi-detached dwelling located in the Petts Woods ARSC. The immediate area contains both semi-detached and detached dwellings which feature a variety of different designs, however, there are similarities in the use of building materials, regular building lines and predominate hipped roofs.

6. No. 97 and its adjoining neighbour are visually well balanced particularly at roof level as neither property appears to have had any modifications carried out to the existing hipped roofs. The symmetry and the pleasing Arts and Crafts style is such that the pair of dwellings make a positive impact to the wider character of the area. Whilst I noticed a number of dwellings in the immediate area with roof modifications, including hipped to gable, these were

few in number and did not appear to be prevalent in this part of Kingsway. Thus, along this section of street, the prevailing symmetry and rhythm of the full hipped roofs are a defining characteristic which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the immediate area and wider ASRC.

7. The proposal would see the existing hipped roof replaced with a hip to gable extension to enable the conversion of the loft space to habitable rooms. Upon the rear roof plane, the proposal would incorporate an extension with Juliet balcony, to the front, three roof lights would be installed.

8. The proposal as a result of its design, scale and form would introduce an unwelcome and juxtaposed imbalance to the roof scape resulting in the permanent erosion of the pleasant and uniformed symmetry which can be seen in this pair of semi-detached properties and predominantly throughout this section of Kingsway. The proposal would neither respect nor complement the original character and the existing well-balanced appearance of the original property or that of its adjoining neighbour. This would result in the proposal being harmful to the character and appearance of the original, the immediate street scape and the wider of the ASRC. In addition, the introduction of three roof lights to the front roof plane would introduce further visual clutter into this unaltered roof scape resulting in further incrementally erosion of its character and appearance.

9. The rear roof extension with Juliette balcony has been designed to be proportionate to the modified hip to gable development. In itself, this element of the proposal would not detract from the character of the area as it would not be highly visible from the street, however, its implementation would rely on the hip to gable roof extension which is considered to be harmful.

10. As noted, I observed a limited number of examples of hip to gable extensions and front roof lights in this part of Kingsway. I have been referred to these and other examples by the appellant. The examples I have seen in the immediate street scape demonstrate the harmful interruption such features make to the street scene, diminishing the symmetrical appearance of the semi-detached properties. Furthermore, I do not consider that these examples in this part of Kingsway now form or have become an established part of the street scape to a degree where they have substantially eroded the original character and appearance of the area given the limited number that are present. Thus, they only serve to illustrate that further similar proposals would be an unwelcome and degrading feature to the immediate area and the wider ASRC.

11. Two appeal decisions have been cited[1]. The appeal relating to Manor Way is similar in terms of the description of development, however, I have not been provided with details of the proposal or its location. Nevertheless, from the Inspector's decision letter I note the following comments "*I have had regard to the fact that a significant number of properties within Manor Way and the surrounding streets within the ASRC have been similarly altered in terms of hip to gable roof extensions and the insertion of rooflights into the front roof slopes of properties".*

12. The appeal relating to Towncourt Crescent was allowed in 2018 which predates the adoption of the 2019 BLP. I have read the Inspector's decision and

[1] APP/G5180/D/19/3222551 and APP/G5180/D/18/3207283

consider the following comments "*I have had particular regard to the fact that so many of the adjacent houses in Towncourt Crescent have been similarly altered by means of hip to gable extensions and the insertion of front facing roof lights. It is also relevant that many of the nearby houses were originally erected to a similar design, incorporating a gable end configuration.*"

13. In both these previous appeals the Inspectors considered that the area surrounding the appeal sites contained a large number of properties which have been altered by way of hipped to gable development. In my assessment of the appeal before me, I have concluded that the area in which the appeal site sits has a limited number of hip to gable extensions. Whilst I appreciate that both the appeals presented by the appellant are sited within the ASRC, I also appreciate 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 are comparable, nor do they set any kind of precedent, particularly as each planning application and appeal is to be determined on its own individual merits. As noted, the prevailing character of this part of Kingsway remains to be that of semi-detached pairs with full hipped roofs displaying a strong sense of symmetry and uniformity and therefore worthy or retention.

14. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property 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.

Other Matters

15. The absence of objections from neighbours is not a consideration that outweighs the harm caused by the development.

Conclusion

16. 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

17. 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