



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 April 2022

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27/04/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/21/3285496

1 Hartfield Road, West Wickham BR4 9DA

- 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 Ben Dudley against the decision of London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/21/01674/FULL6, dated 5 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is side ground floor extension to create a garage/store room and side first floor extension to create an extra bedroom.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appellant has provided revised drawings as part of their appeal submission which omit the proposed ground floor extension. Having regard to the 'Wheatcroft Principles'¹, given these drawings reduce the scale of the development, I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by me taking them into consideration. Therefore, I have considered both scenarios in terms of the proposals with and without the ground floor extension.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Hartfield Road is predominantly characterised by two-storey, semi-detached dwellings which are set back from front boundaries. The road is tree-lined with grass verges. The principal elevations of several of the semi-detached pairs on the road have distinctive gable-fronted catslide roof forms. Many of these properties also have first-floor side extensions of varying designs. However, there is generally visual cohesion between individual semi-detached pairs. This is the case with the appeal dwelling and No 3 Hartfield Road which have matching catslide roof forms, front bay windows and first-floor side additions of comparable scale. The appeal dwelling and other corner dwellings in the area vary in orientation and design but are generally set away from their side boundaries. Overall, these factors combine to give spaciousness and a general consistency to the street scene, providing for a pleasant suburban character.

¹ (Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE [JPL 1982 P37])

5. Even accounting for its position set back from the principal elevation of the dwelling, the first-floor extension would combine with the existing first-floor side addition to form an elongated side projection. This would appear at odds with the host dwelling's original catslide form. As a result of the incremental additions, the front elevation of the dwelling would also have a disjointed appearance. The first-floor extension would therefore not complement the host dwelling and would also visually unbalance the respective semi-detached pair.
6. The ground floor extension would sit very close to the side boundary with Harvest Bank Road. It would further emphasise the excessive width of the side projections relative to the form of the host dwelling and would give the dwelling a cramped appearance within what is a prominent corner plot. This would add to the harm already identified.
7. Given that I have found the proposals would be harmful to the appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings both with and without the single storey side extension, the revised plans referred to under the preliminary matter do not resolve my concerns. The use of matching materials would not be sufficient to assimilate the proposals into the street scene.
8. My attention has been drawn to extensions that have taken place to other dwellings in close proximity to the appeal site. However, from my observations on site, none are identical to the appeal proposal. In any case, the extensions that have taken place to nearby dwellings do not persuade me that the proposals would appear as a cohesive addition having regard to the site-specific factors identified.
9. I conclude, the development would have a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In that regard, it would conflict with the requirements for a high standard of design and for proposals to complement the host dwelling of Policies 6 (Residential Extensions) and 37 (General Design of Development) of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (2019) (LP).
10. The Council's decision also refers to Policy 8 (Side Space) of the LP. This policy specifies amongst other things that proposals of two or more storeys must be a minimum of 1 metre from the side boundary of the site. Given the first-floor element of the proposal would meet this requirement, I have not identified conflict with this particular policy. Even so, this does not overcome my overall design concerns or the conflict with the other policies of the LP identified above.

Other Matters

11. The appellant suggests that *'an extension to the ground floor could possibly be constructed under the property's permitted development rights if the extension is pulled back from the front façade'*. However, I must assess the appeal based on the drawings before me which are different to this scenario and for the reasons given would be harmful.
12. Even if the proposal would be of benefit to occupiers of the host dwelling in terms of providing additional bedroom and home office space, this does not justify the harm identified.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and therefore conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR