



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/22/3290233

12 Petts Wood Road, Petts Wood, Orpington BR5 1LB

- 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 Adekunle Ajagbe against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/21/03289/FULL6, dated 28 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, first floor side extension, front porch and raised patio.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have noted that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) refers to policy 9 of the Bromley Local Plan (BLP) 2019 in its reason for refusal. This has also been highlighted by the appellant in their Grounds of Appeal Statement. The LPA has confirmed at appeal that policy 9 was added as a refusal reason in error, indicating that this should have read policy 8. I have assessed the scheme on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with specific regard to the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (PWASRC).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in the PWASRC, as defined in Appendix 17 of the BLP, which is a principally residential neighbourhood, with varying styles of properties, albeit with a visual rhythm, pattern and feel. The appeal property is a substantial two-storey semi-detached dwelling, with a mock Tudor gabled roof to the front. This principal gabled façade has a strongly symmetrical arrangement with the adjoining property at No. 10 Petts Wood Road. At ground floor level, there is a single-storey side extension and shared garage, both attached to No. 14 Petts Wood Road, which are of a subservient scale. At the rear, the appeal property and its neighbours, have had incremental alterations and additions in varying styles and designs.
5. Policies 6, 37 and 44 of the BLP 2019, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design and that it respects, complements and is compatible with the surrounding area. The National

Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) also guides that proposals should respond to local character or reflect the identity of the surroundings.

6. Policy 8 of the BLP require two storey extensions to normally retain a minimum of 1m space from the side boundary, or more generous side space where greater distances prevail. Appendix 17 of the BLP, defines the PWASRC, and specifically refers to the width of the separation between the houses being of a particularly high standard.
7. Petts Wood Road, and the wider PWASRC area, is an attractive suburban area with a variety of properties, many of which have been subject to alterations and extensions. I noted during the site visit that there are various gaps between properties, albeit some wider than others. Nevertheless, there is an established regularity to the pattern between dwellings. This provides breathing room between properties and a degree of permeability, which is an important factor of the spaciouly sized plots defining the character of the area.
8. I have noted the existing arrangement between the appeal site and the adjoining property at No. 14, where there is an existing single storey shared garage; a single storey extension at the appeal site; and a two-storey flat roof side extension, hard up to the boundary. These are all to be retained as part of the appeal scheme. Also, I have noted that the proposal has been set off the boundary at the first-floor level.
9. The single storey rear extension, front porch and raised patio would be of modest proportions, with the limited scale of these extensions appearing in keeping with the context of the area. During the site visit, I noted that modest rear extensions and porches of varying character are by no means unusual. Consequently, these would cause no harm to the character and appearance of either its host dwelling or the wider PSASRC in this regard.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to the side extension at No. 10 on the opposite side of the proposal, granted at appeal (ref: APP/G5180/D/18/3194319), where the Inspector was satisfied that the gap proposed complied with the objectives of policy 8. However, here the garages adjoining the boundary were demolished as part of the scheme, and the gap between these properties retained, unlike the scheme before me.
11. The gap provided at the upper floor level here would provide a visible break at the rear of the site. However, when viewed from the front, the appearance of a gap would be significantly reduced, given the retention of the shared garage with a new cat slide roof running into the main roof. As a result, it would appear as though there is no meaningful separation between the buildings. The proposal would create a cramped terrace like appearance that would harm the separation between dwellings, which characterises this residential area.
12. Overall, the proposed development would not respect or enhance the special and distinctive qualities of the PWASRC with specific regard to separation between the houses and thus would cause harm. It follows that the proposed development would not comply with Policies 6, 8, 37 and 44 of the BLP 2019, the general thrust of which is to seek a high quality of design which respects the special and distinctive qualities.

Other matters

13. Whilst I accept that the proposal would be of benefit to the appellant in providing more rationalised and useable floorspace of a modern standard, that is nonetheless a private benefit which does not outweigh the public harm that would result. I also note that no objections to the scheme were received by neighbours, however that does not in and of itself indicate that proposed development would be acceptable.
14. I have noted the certificate of lawfulness issued for the hip to gable and dormer extension at the appeal site, however this scheme differs from that before me. Therefore, neither that, nor any other matter is sufficient to alter my reasoning above, namely that the development proposed would be unacceptable.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, having had regard to the development plan as a whole and to all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR