



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 January 2023

By Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/22/3305454

7 Blendon Drive, Bexley DA5 3AA

- 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 Mrs Palmer against the decision of The London Borough of Bexley Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01356/FUL, dated 24 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a one-bedroom bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The local area surrounding the appeal site is made up of a variety of good sized detached and semi-detached houses and detached bungalows in a predominantly residential area. These sit on relatively generous plots that allow for front and rear gardens. Whilst these exhibit a wide variety of architectural expressions, with many, including the existing house on the appeal plot appearing to have undergone a variety of extensions and alterations. The spatial characteristics of the area are defined by this generosity of plot and the scale of dwellings, which leads to a cohesive streetscene, familiar to many suburban areas.
4. The appeal site forms part of the rear garden to the existing two storey detached house on the appeal plot, which is located on the inside of a 90 degree bend in Blendon Drive. The proposal is for a single storey one bedroom brick built bungalow with a hipped roof, which would sit at the rearmost part of the existing garden.
5. The proposed bungalow would be orientated at 90 degrees to the existing house on the appeal plot, with its front elevation aligning with that of 9 Blendon Drive (No.9) and the building line on this part of the street. This would result in the proposed bungalow being wider than it would be deep and being placed at the rear of the appeal site on a foreshortened plot, creating a

- particularly tight space to the rear, which would form a patio and lawned area. This would be enclosed to the rear by a 2 metre high timber fence.
6. To the front of the proposed bungalow would be a garden that would mirror the general size of other front gardens on the street and would, along with paving and lawn area, provide a parking space. To one side the proposed bungalow would be approximately 1 metre from the Flank wall of No.9. On the other side, a proposed 2 metre timber fence would divide the garden to the existing house on the plot, to create the appeal site and two separate plots. This fence would be approximately 0.525 metres from the flank wall of the proposed bungalow.
 7. The proposal follows an earlier refused application¹ for a 2 storey dwelling on the same site. The appellant has set out how the appeal proposal is reduced in scale from this earlier proposal and is intended to overcome the reasons for the refusal given in the Council's decision notice, which related to the effect on streetscene and the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers.
 8. As part of my site visit, I was able to carefully consider the relationship of the proposed development with neighbouring buildings. The proposal would be smaller in scale than the two storey dwelling previously proposed. It would, however, be particularly plain and simple in design and architectural expression, which, along with its small scale would give the impression of being an outbuilding rather than a dwelling. For this reason, the proposal would stand in evident contrast to the more decorative architectural expression of the dwellings in the street and the local area.
 9. Despite the small scale of the proposed bungalow, it would also appear to be squeezed on its plot, to the sides and rear. This would result in an uncharacteristic form of development, which would not reflect the spatial characteristics of the local area.
 10. The proposal would, therefore, appear as a cramped form of development and an incongruous addition to the local streetscene, which would result in significant harm to the established character and appearance of the local area.
 11. This would be contrary to policies H3, H8 and Env39 of the Bexley Unitary Development Plan (2004), policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) (LP) and paragraph 130 of the National Policy Framework (2021). These collectively seek development that is of high quality design and that responds to place and is compatible with the character or appearance of the local area.

Other Matters

12. Whilst the Council has found that the proposal would be contrary to policy D4 of the LP, this policy does not relate directly to development proposals, but to design policy and design management by London boroughs.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. Set against the harm identified there would be social and economic benefits associated with the development. The appeal site is small in terms of its

¹ Planning Ref: 19/02365/FUL

ability to provide housing, and the proposal would provide a single 1 bedroom dwelling. Although a small contribution to the housing stock of the London Borough of Bexley, small housing schemes do collectively make a major contribution to the number of new residential units, as recognised in policies H1 and H2 of the LP, which seek to increase the supply of housing on small sites, and I have given this significant weight in my considerations.

14. The proposal would also generate employment opportunities during its construction and through the employment of local services for its upkeep and maintenance when occupied. In connection with the single additional dwelling proposed, these benefits attract modest weight in favour of the proposed development.
15. These benefits would not, however, outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the local area that I have identified. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR