



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2023

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/22/3302785

49 Stansted Crescent, Bexley DA5 3HZ

- 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 Nasir Shamim against the decision of London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 22/01185/FUL, dated 5 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing garage and erection of a two-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of the existing garage and erection of a two-storey side extension at 49 Stansted Crescent, Bexley DA5 3HZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/01185/FUL, dated 5 May 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan:
 - Drawing 03 (April 2022) – Side Extension Planning Drawing
 - 3) the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is on the south side of Stansted Crescent, a residential street primarily composed of two-storey houses arranged in pairs (like the appeal property) or in short terraces of three to six dwellings, although there is also a two-storey block of flats and two groups of bungalows towards the western end of the street. I saw that most of the blocks on the street are characterised by pitched roofs with gable ends; although there are some exceptions, and notwithstanding that there appears to be some variety in the ages (and therefore the finish and detailing) of individual blocks, this gives the street an overall pleasant visual consistency. The proposed development is the

demolition of an existing garage at the side of No 49, and the construction of a two-storey side extension.

4. The Council's 2004 *Design and Development Control Guidelines* ("the guidelines") were published as part of the Unitary Development Plan ("the UDP") and set out basic design principles and guidance for house extensions. These include that two-storey side extensions should be setback at first floor level at least 500mm behind the main front elevation and that the ridge height of the extension is lower than the ridge height of the main roof. This guidance is intended to ensure that extensions are subordinate in scale and form to the existing main dwelling.
5. In this case, the extension would maintain the existing front and rear building lines of the appeal property; the roof would be a gable-ended continuation of the existing main roof. The Council considered that these factors, combined with the front elevation of No 49 being some 5m or so forward of (and at a different angle to) that of No 47 next door to the east, would make the extension a dominant and harmful feature in the street scene.
6. I saw on my site visit that, because of being set forward of the neighbouring property, the side elevation of the appeal property is already a reasonably prominent feature in the street when approaching from the eastern end of Stansted Crescent, although this is somewhat offset by the curve in the road. I also saw that the spacing between adjoining blocks on the street already appears to be a little irregular, and as a result bringing the side elevation of the appeal property a bit closer to No 47 as proposed would not cause any serious disruption to the existing pattern of development on the street. In my view, although the prominence of the side of the appeal property would be slightly increased as a result of the extension, this would not lead to it becoming dominant or intrusive in views along Stansted Crescent (including from the open green space northeast of the appeal property).
7. I acknowledge that the form of the proposed extension would not comply with the Council's guidelines in respect of the roof ridge and a setback in the front elevation. However, I saw that at No 59 Stansted Crescent (to which the appellant drew my attention) and at No 19 side extensions had been built in a similar manner to the appeal scheme, and an entirely separate dwelling (No 61A) has been added to the side of No 61; none of these has either a setback on the front elevation or a step down in the roof ridge. While I do not know the precise circumstances in which those developments came into being, I saw that they have not caused significant harm to the character or appearance of the street. The proposed extension would be in keeping with the prevailing form of other dwellings (including side extensions) on the street, and this is a consideration which justifies setting aside the advice of the guidelines in this case.
8. I also note that the Council's officer report considers that the use of a gable roof would add to the perceived dominance of the extension. However, the use of a hipped roof would have the effect of unbalancing the semi-detached pair including the appeal property and, again, I consider that the proposed gable form would be in keeping with the prevailing character of the rest of the street.
9. I therefore conclude that, notwithstanding the conflict with the guidelines, the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the character or appearance of the area. It would therefore comply with Policies H9 and ENV39

of the 2004 Bexley Unitary Development Plan which, among other things, seek to ensure that development (including residential extensions) is well-designed and compatible in terms of siting, design and appearance with the existing building and the surrounding area.

Conditions

10. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have specified the approved plan so as to provide certainty. In order to protect the character and appearance of the area I have also included a condition requiring materials matching the existing dwelling to be used for the extension.

Conclusion

11. I have found that the proposal would comply with the provisions of the development plan. There are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

M Cryan

Inspector