



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2023

by K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/22/3313487

100 Ravensbourne Avenue, Bromley BR2 0AX

- 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 and Mrs Hudson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/22/00371/FULL6, dated 12 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 27 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with new gable and rear dormer.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At my site visit I observed that the development had commenced and was substantially complete. However, I noted some differences between the submitted plans and the development which had been constructed. For the avoidance of doubt, I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.
3. As the proposal is in a conservation area, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, as set out in section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Shortland's Village Conservation Area (SVCA).

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling located in a predominantly residential area of Ravensbourne Avenue, Bromley. The properties along Ravensbourne Avenue were mostly constructed during the late C19th and early C20th. The site is opposite the junction with Downs Hill and is in a highly conspicuous position.
6. The site lies within the Shortlands Village Conservation Area (SVCA) which was designated in 2021. In designating the conservation area, the Council highlighted that the area is under developmental pressure, with most of the development taking place being loft conversions and extensions with some minor infill development. The purpose of designating the SVCA was to seek to manage change more sympathetically within the area.

7. The significance of the conservation area, as a whole, is derived from its historical development following the arrival of the railway in 1858, with the majority of development taking place around 1876. The road layout of the village was created in conjunction with the existing roads, the newly constructed railway, the river and the topography of the valley. The street names make reference to local places and the river, invoking a sense of history and place. The planned layout and plot size of the streets were aimed at providing desirable homes for working people
8. The significance of the conservation area, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is derived from the presence of a clear hierarchy to the streets. Ravensbourne Avenue exhibits a grander, leafier character with the most spacious plots found on this street with wide gaps and views to the rear. The properties are mostly highly detailed and decorative semi-detached houses, with hipped roofs a predominant roof form. These features contribute positively to the significance of the conservation area.
9. The host dwelling had a hipped roof which replicated that of the adjoining semi-detached house and reflected the predominant roof form in the locality. Whilst the neighbouring property has been altered, the introduction of the hip to gable extension unbalances the roof line. By virtue of its significant size and design, the hip to gable extension is an incongruous addition which fails to reflect the character and appearance of the area.
10. The development is highly visible within the surrounding area, particularly from Downs Hill, as you approach Ravensbourne Avenue. Due to the use of a light grey roof tile, the development draws the eye and does not appear in keeping with the materials used by neighbouring properties.
11. There is also a noticeable reduction in the appearance of a gap between the host property and its neighbour, which is caused by the hip to gable design of the extension. Whilst the size of the gaps found between this style of property tend to be smaller than some of the others within the road, the original hipped roof design helped contribute to a more open sense of character, a positive feature of the conservation area, which is lost as a result of the development.
12. The scale, mass and proportions of the proposed development would not result in a subordinate addition to the property, nor would it reflect the surrounding built form found within this part of the conservation area. Accordingly, it would detract from the overall appearance of the conservation area.
13. The visual impact of the dormer is minimised by virtue of its position to the rear elevation, and position above the eaves and beneath the ridge line. I also observed that most rear elevations of the properties along the street have been modified to some degree. However, in this case the size of the dormer necessitates the hip to gable alteration to the roof line, which means that the overall development is highly visible and inconsistent with the built character of the neighbouring dwellings. In coming to this view, I have taken into account that the development does not exceed the height of the host dwelling, preserves the front roof pitch and features such as chimney stacks and pots, and does not affect the layout of the conservation area.
14. I have had regard to the variety of styles of properties located within Ravensbourne Avenue; however, the 1930's style hipped roof semi-detached properties make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the

area. The few examples I observed of side gables appear as an exception to this character and do not read as positive features in the locality.

15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the SVCA as a whole. It therefore conflicts with Policies 6, 37 and 41 of the Bromley Local Plan (2019) (BLP). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that development, including residential extensions, are of a high-quality design that respect the scale, layout, materials and form of existing buildings and spaces, are compatible with surrounding development, and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
16. In failing to preserve the character and appearance of the SVCA, I find that the appeal proposal would, in the words of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. In such circumstances, the Framework requires that the less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits. In this instance, the development proposed provides additional living space for the occupiers of the dwelling. However, this is a private benefit, no public benefits have been put to me, and the lack of harm to the living conditions of neighbours and the proposal's compliance with energy conservation and sustainability requirements are neutral factors. Accordingly, I find that no there are public benefits in this instance that outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused to the significance of the SVCA.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given, the proposal would not accord with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR