



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/22/3312611

57 Birchwood Road, Wilmington, Kent, DA2 7HF.

- 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 Zemaitis against the decision of Dartford Borough Council,
 - The application Ref DA/22/01071/FUL, dated 13 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as *existing bungalow conversion into two-storey family house*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposed development on the architectural integrity of the host property and thereby the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, 57 Birchwood Road is a detached chalet bungalow. It is part of a group of detached and semi-detached bungalows and chalet bungalows.
4. No 55 to the north-east is a narrow fronted detached chalet bungalow with projecting dormers and no 59 to the south-west is a chalet bungalow. No 57 sits at a slightly lower level than the neighbouring dwellings on either side and the ground level at the rear of the bungalow is at a lower level to the road.
5. While the dwellings on the opposite side of the road are large detached two-storey houses set well back from the road those on this side are primarily bungalows and chalet bungalows. Accordingly, the properties on either side of the road are not directly comparable in design, scale, form or siting.
6. The appellant proposes raising the roof of the existing property to make, what would be a two-storey dwelling along with the construction of a basement to the rear. Little of the original chalet would be retained.
7. Due to the proposed design, and as No 57 is set at a slightly lower level to the neighbouring properties, the roof height of the dwelling as altered would only be slightly higher than its immediate neighbours. However, the introduction of

two dominant gables to the street façade would give the dwelling as extended the appearance of a two-storey house and not a chalet bungalow.

8. Further, due to the plan shape of the house as extended the main roof would be flat with sloping slate covered sides. This would, in my judgement, result in the dwelling when, viewed from the sides and rear, appearing somewhat squat, bulky, utilitarian and of an unappealing appearance. This would be at odds to the vernacular form and appearance of the host property and neighbouring dwellings in the street.
9. For all these reasons I conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposal would cause significant harm to architectural integrity of the host property and thereby the character and appearance of the area.
10. To allow the development would therefore be contrary to the objectives of Policies DP2 and DP7 of the Dartford Local Plan Document-*Dartford Development Policies Plan* (Adopted July 2017) and Policies M1 and M11 of Dartford's emerging Pre-submission Local Plan-Dartford Local Plan to 2037 (Adopted September 2021) as they relate to, amongst other things, a requirement for development to be of a good design that responds to and retains local character.

Other Considerations

11. In reaching my decision I have had regard to the fact that the Council found that the development would meet the necessary provision for off-street parking, and it would not impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. However, the absence of harm in relation to other considerations are neutral matters that weigh neither for nor against the proposal.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR