



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2023

by L Francis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/23/3327745

Cranbrook, Holwood Park Avenue, Orpington, Bromley BR6 8NG

- 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 Michael Paye against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/23/01691/FULL6, dated 27 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 3 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is elevational alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for elevational alterations at Cranbrook, Holwood Park Avenue, Orpington, Bromley BR6 8NG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/23/01691/FULL6, dated 27 April 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: HPA-984-PD-030; HPA-984-PD-040; HPA-984-PD-050.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my site visit, the works the subject of this appeal were in progress, including the replacement of the roof tiles with slates, replacement of the windows and removal of decorative timber. I shall therefore deal with the appeal as part-retrospective.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposals would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Keston Park Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within the Keston Park CA. The statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The Keston Park Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Guidance¹ (SPG) defines the CA's chief interest as being its historic connection with the Holwood House

¹ Adopted 1999 and updated 2002

Estate and the way in which the landscape was subsequently incorporated into the development of large and individualistic private homes in a manner typical of American suburban development.

5. It also states that the character of the park stems from, and is maintained by, 2 components: a) a strong landscape framework, i.e., a common approach to tree and shrub planting and the design and layout of paths and driveways and b) very low density. The SPG acknowledges that the development of plots by individual owners has resulted in a great diversity of materials and construction methods, and there is no dominant style of development. It is clear from the SPG that the main characteristics of the CA are not the specific buildings within the park, but how the properties and the park have been developed within the landscape. I consider the significance of the CA is derived from the highly dispersed, low-density nature of development and its setting within the landscape.
6. The dwelling is not on a local list of buildings considered to be of local importance. Whilst there are some Arts and Crafts references in the elevation as shown on the drawings, they are fairly limited. Notwithstanding this, I have no reason to disagree with the Council that the building makes a positive contribution to the CA.
7. I noted on my site visit that there are several examples of houses influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, as well as classical styles and more modern interpretations which are not attributable to a specific architectural style. There is evidence of many redevelopments and alterations, some examples of which have been drawn to my attention, including Forest Dene, Evergreen, Woodlands and Shirley, all of which I saw on my site visit. The examples quoted demonstrate the variety of elevational designs across the CA, including that where decorative timber and other features have been removed and replaced by other designs.
8. The evidence provided in the form of the letter from a previous owner regarding the timber panelling to the front elevation and the windows indicates that both these elements were installed during a development in the late 1990s and were not features original to the dwelling. I note however that in the Council's delegated report, the timber is referred to as original wood panelling. Notwithstanding this conflict, I do not find any harm to the CA in removing the timber as it is not a feature which defines the character or appearance of the CA.
9. Slate roofs are a common feature of the CA, along with render treatment to front elevations. I do not consider that the tiled roof pitches to the windows or garage are a feature that defines the building or the wider CA and their removal would not be a harmful intervention. The proposed porch would reflect others in the area and fit with the proposed elevational style. Whilst some detail on the existing elevation would be lost with the removal of the features beneath the eaves, the modelling shown in the render would add some interest to the front elevation.
10. Whilst I accept that the use of aluminium framed windows is not supported by the guidance contained in the SPG, some of these windows were in situ on my visit and their detailing and style accorded with the elevational style and use of materials. I do not consider that the style of window would compromise the character and appearance of the building itself or the significance of the CA. I

find overall that the alterations would be consistent with the aims of Bromley's Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (2023) which sets out detailed guidance supporting the Council's design policies.

11. For the above reasons, the proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such, they accord with London Plan policy HC1 which requires development to be sympathetic to the heritage asset's significance. The alterations are also in line with the expectations of policies 6 and 37 of the Bromley Local Plan 2019 (BLP), which amongst other things, seek to achieve a high standard of design, compatible with the surrounding area and which respect heritage assets. Policy 41 of the BLP specifically relates to conservation areas, requiring developments to preserve and enhance their characteristics and appearance through, amongst other things, respecting or complementing the form and materials of existing buildings, respecting the historic value of the area, and the use of high-quality materials.

Conclusion

12. I have found that the proposal is in line with the development plan read as a whole, and no material considerations have been shown to have sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is allowed.

L Francis

INSPECTOR