



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2023

by N Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/23/3329362

77 London Road, Crayford, BEXLEY, DA1 4BL

- 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 Georgios Bihtas against the decision of London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 23/00280/FUL, dated 5 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is formation of a vehicular access and formation of hard standing to the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have taken the description of proposed development from the Council's decision notice as this clearly and succinctly describes the act of development only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property forms part of a terrace of properties within a development that has its own architectural style. As a group this makes them architecturally distinctive. Along the road frontage the vegetation and areas of open space form part of the character and appearance of this development. As such, these are important features of the development that contribute to its distinctiveness.
5. The frontage of the property, like others in the terrace, is currently a vegetated garden and devoid of parked vehicles within the frontage. The proposal would replace this with a hard surfaced frontage that would involve the removal of the existing front boundary hedge. This would considerably alter the appearance of this property, the terrace, and the wider street scene. The creation of a hard surfaced frontage with parked vehicle within the frontage would erode the distinctive verdant character of the area and the contribution that this front garden currently makes to the appearance of both the property and the wider area. Consequently, the proposed development would be

visually harmful to both the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.

6. My attention has been drawn to the appellant's intention to hard surface the front garden irrespective of the outcome of the planning application that is now the subject of this appeal, due to difficulties in maintaining the garden, noting its gets muddy in winter and attracts rats. However, the proposal before me includes the formation of a vehicular access with hard surfaced frontage intended to park a vehicle. Even if the frontage were hard surfaced, this does not make the proposal more acceptable, nor does it outweigh the harm that I have identified above. I, therefore, give this little weight.
7. There are other properties along London Road that host vehicular cross overs. Numbers 96, 114 and 116 have been drawn to my attention. However, these are not within the immediate environs of the appeal site and relate to properties of a different style to that of the appeal property and its surroundings. The appeal site is very different in character and appearance and this proposal should be considered on its own merits.
8. Recent and future development in the wider area may have the potential to increase parking pressures within roads in the locality. The creation of the hard surfaced frontage could also facilitate an electric vehicle and its charging. This would provide a benefit in reducing vehicle emissions. However, these matters do not overcome the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the dwelling or the area.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan 2023. These policies seek, amongst other matters, development to achieve high quality design through good design, a key consideration of which is local character and context and to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Other Matter

10. Concern has been raised to the Council's handling of the planning application in regard of requiring a screening analysis to support the proposal. However, this is a matter that, if necessary, should be raised with the Council away from this appeal. In any event, this concern would not lead me to alter my above findings.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR