
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/23/3325385
15 Oakhurst Avenue, Bexleyheath DA7 5JL

- 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 West and East against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 23/00038/FUL, dated 9 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is for a two storey side extension, part two storey / single storey rear extension, new front porch and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension, part two storey / single storey rear extension, new front porch and alterations at 15 Oakhurst Avenue, Bexleyheath DA7 5JL in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/00038/FUL, dated 9 January 2023, 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 plans: 2232 LP01, 2232 BP01, 2232 002.
 - 3) 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development having regard to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached, two-storey house with driveway parking to the front on the southeastern side of Oakhurst Avenue. The locality is broadly characterised by residential properties in suburban surrounds.
4. The proposal involves a first floor side addition that would have the same ridge height as the existing roof, and with a front elevation flush with that of the host dwelling. From an appearance point of view, the Council is concerned that the extension would not appear subservient to the main property.

5. I acknowledge that in pure design terms it is usually preferable to construct an extension so that it appears subservient to the host dwelling, often by adopting such features as setbacks or differences in ridge heights. Indeed, I note that other residences in the vicinity have these elements. However, the critical issue is whether the proposal before me would cause harm sufficient to withhold permission.
6. To this end, I saw at my site visit that a number of other dwellings along Oakhurst Avenue have side elements with no break in the ridge line or set back from the front elevation. As such, the appeal property would appear similar in many respects. Moreover, many of the semi-detached pairs along the road have considerable differences between them; I am of the view that the appeal scheme would not appear out of place within this context.
7. At the back the new projecting element at first floor level would be set within the body of the rear elevation, and the pitched roof would be below the main ridge line and flush with the side roof slope. The gable end would be different to the hipped nature of the remainder of the property, however I am satisfied that the addition would integrate with the house without seeming dominant or incongruous.
8. Drawing the above together, I find that whilst perhaps not ideal aesthetically, the proposed extension would not appear out of place in the neighbourhood and would cause no harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be consistent with Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 and Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (April 2023), which seek to ensure development is of an acceptable scale and design. It would also meet with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conditions

9. I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition to the standard implementation condition, the approved plans are listed for certainty. A condition requiring external materials to match those on the existing dwelling would provide for a satisfactory appearance.

Conclusion

10. Having regard to all matters, the appeal succeeds.

C Hall

INSPECTOR