
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/23/3334267

59 Mayplace Road West, Bexleyheath DA7 4JL

- 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 Mrs S L McCalla against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 23/01777/FUL, dated 9 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is for a double storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on a) the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area; and b) the living conditions of the occupiers of 57 and 61 Mayplace Road West with respect to outlook, overbearing impact and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, end-terrace dwelling with off-street parking on an area of hardstanding to the front. The locality is broadly characterised by residential properties set within urban surrounds on the edge of Bexleyheath town centre.
 4. The two-storey element of the proposal would have a modest footprint and infill the existing bay at the back of the house between the rear wall of the main property and the side of the two-storey outrigger. It would be set against the backdrop of the existing building, and would not project beyond the flank or rear elevations. To my mind, it would visually connect with the overall appearance of the host residence, without dominating it, and respond to the original design characteristics.
 5. Conversely, the scheme would also introduce a substantial ground floor rear extension to the house that would span the entire width of the plot. The sheer size of the addition would significantly increase the footprint of the ground floor and appear disproportionate in comparison to the host property, competing with its overall scale. Its boxy design would be clearly visible from the patio areas and rear gardens of dwellings to either side, appearing discordant and harmful to the character of the property and the locality.
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6. I appreciate that the development would have limited public impacts and it would provide a more liveable space and improve the functionality of the existing property. Moreover, I am aware that the appeal site is not within a conservation area or within the curtilage of or near any nationally or locally listed buildings, the outdated and unattractive existing single storey extension at ground floor level would be removed, soft landscaping would not decrease, and the scheme would be built in matching materials. However, none of these points could justify the harm I have identified above.
7. I observed the varied nature of the rear of the terrace of which the appeal property forms a part, and other extensions to houses in the vicinity, for example the pair of ground floor additions at the back of 49 and 51 Mayplace Road West. However, these do not span the width of their plots in the same way as the appeal proposals before me. In any event, additions to other dwellings would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
8. Although the two-storey addition is acceptable, I conclude that the ground floor rear extension would result in harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policy DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan 2023, which requires new development of acceptable scale and appearance.

Living conditions

9. The substantial rearward projection and height of the single storey rear extension would significantly increase the size and scale of development facing the neighbouring units at 57 and 61 Mayplace Road West, thereby adding material bulk to the built form in close proximity to the common boundaries.
10. In doing so, this would create a considerable extent of development which would dominate the outlook from the rear openings of nos. 57 and 61 and the environment in and around their patios and back gardens. This would be in a manner which would be overbearing and oppressive, and materially worse than the existing state of affairs.
11. In terms of loss of light to the adjoining dwellings no robust information, for example in the form of sunlight projections using Building Research Establishment guidelines, has been provided as part of the appeal. Given the depth of the development and its proximity to the neighbouring windows and patio areas, in the absence of any cogent evidence to the contrary, I consider that there would be a loss of light that would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupants therein.
12. The two-storey rear extension would lie in close proximity to the rear openings and patio area of no.61. Nevertheless, due to the tight-knit relationship between the houses, the existing built form of the appeal dwelling already casts a shadow over the patio area of no.61 in the afternoon. Furthermore, the depth of the element would be relatively modest, and set against the backdrop of the mass of the existing appeal dwelling. Overall, I consider that this part of the development would not have a harmful impact on neighbouring living conditions in respect of outlook and light above and beyond that presently experienced.
13. Although the two-storey addition is acceptable, I consider that the ground floor rear extension would be injurious to the living conditions of the occupants of

neighbouring properties in relation to outlook, overbearing impact and light. This would fail to meet Policy DM11 of the LP, which seeks to ensure that appropriate levels of outlook, natural daylight and other forms of amenity are provided.

Conclusion

14. Given the above arguments and all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR