



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2023 by A Khan BSc (Hons) MA

Decision by S Edwards BA MA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/23/3326188

30 The Covert, Petts Wood, Orpington BR6 0BU

- 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 Matthew Salter against the decision of the Council of London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/01545/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension with dormer windows to front and rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Government published in December 2023 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
4. The appeal scheme affects a property situated in a conservation area and I shall therefore have special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Covert Conservation Area (CCA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The CCA is an attractive residential area which is predominantly characterised by interwar detached and semi-detached dwellings set within a green and verdant setting provided by deep front gardens, grass verges and mature trees. Many of the properties such as the appeal dwelling are individually

designed, in a neo-Tudor style. The consistent gaps between buildings, low boundary treatments and deep front gardens gives the area a distinctive spacious feel. This orderly layout creates a consistent character among the varied dwelling styles. The built forms, together with the vegetation and sense of spaciousness provided by the regular spacing between buildings, all contribute to the special interest of the CCA.

7. The appeal dwelling adjoins 28 The Covert (No 28) to form a pair of semi-detached properties characterised by their attractive architectural detailing and strong sense of symmetry, which remains evident within the street scene, despite subsequent alterations and extensions. For these reasons, the appeal property and No 28 make a positive contribution to the special interest of the CCA.
8. The proposed two front dormers and extension would be new features that would unbalance the front façade of the otherwise largely matching dwellings. This would disrupt the symmetry that defines this pair of semi-detached properties and therefore have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the CCA. There are other examples of front dormer windows elsewhere in the area, notably on the opposite side of the road. However, these dormers appear to be historic features and form part of the symmetry that characterises this nearby pair of semi-detached properties.
9. Policy 8 of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (January 2019) (LP) requires “a minimum 1 metre space from the side boundary of the site”, which the proposed extension would comply with. However, Policy 8 also makes it clear that “where higher standards of separation already exist within residential areas, proposals will be expected to provide a more generous side space”. In this instance, the proposed extension would greatly reduce the degree of separation between the appeal property and the neighbouring dwelling. The resulting built form would harmfully erode the sense of spaciousness and openness which characterise the CCA, to the detriment of its significance.
10. The proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the special interest of the CCA. This is a consideration to which I ascribe considerable importance and weight. In accordance with paragraph 208 of the Framework, the harm identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Having regard to the available evidence, I have no reasons to believe that the continued occupation of the property is dependent on the construction of the proposed development. The appeal scheme would provide additional accommodation for existing but also future occupiers of the dwelling, which may be regarded as a public benefit. However, this would not outweigh the harm which I have identified.
11. Given the above, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CCA and would therefore be contrary to the design requirements of LP Policies 6, 8 and 37. It would also be in conflict with LP Policy 41, which requires that development in conservation areas respects or complements the layout and form of existing buildings and spaces. Furthermore, the proposal would conflict with section 16 of the Framework, which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

12. Concerns have been raised within the case officer report regarding the effect of the proposal on the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC). However, the Council's reason for refusal does not refer to the ASRC and the appeal scheme was not found to conflict with LP Policy 44, which deals with ASRCs. This is therefore not a matter which I have considered further as part of this appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. There are no material considerations, which indicate that the appeal should be determined, other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Khan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR