



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2024 by R Parker Bsc (Hons)

Decision by S Edwards BA MA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/23/3331131

10 Clifford Avenue, Bromley, Chislehurst BR7 5DZ

- 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 Lara Buckler against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/02963/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Re-development and refurbishment of existing family dwelling. With addition of front, rear and first floor extensions. Introduction of front porch and change of roof form. Proposed new 2m timber boarded fence to Sylvester Ave Elevation.'
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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. In December 2023, the Government published 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. During the site visit I observed that development was taking place on site. Work appeared to be ongoing throughout the dwelling as well as in the garden and in front of the house. However, that is not a matter for me to have regard to and I shall consider the appeal in accordance with the proposed plans.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site lies in a residential area characterised by detached houses of different eras built mostly in groups of a consistent design. Dwellings are in spacious plots, set back behind front gardens and driveways. The area has an open and verdant suburban feel, aided by the presence of mature trees and low levels of on street parking. Whilst some of the dwellings have been altered or extended, the pattern of development and spacing between properties appear strongly consistent.
7. The appeal property is the last in a line of six dwellings of the same age, built to the same design. Despite some alterations and extensions, the original form remains identifiable in most cases, and all the properties retain a clear distinction between the original built form and any additions. In particular, important features remain, including a stepped appearance to the front elevation and a coherent building line.
8. The appeal dwelling is a two-storey detached chalet style house set within a large, prominent corner plot, which is highly visible from the public realm. Previous additions include enlargements to the porch and garage. The latter extends to the side boundary shared with 12 Clifford Avenue (No 12). Despite this, as it is single storey and substantially set back from the front elevation, the garage enlargement maintains the spatial standards which characterise this area.
9. Policy 8 of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (January 2019) (LP) requires extensions of two or more storeys in height to retain a minimum 1 metre from the side boundary for the full height and length of the building. It 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. The support text to the policy explains that the retention of space around residential buildings is important to prevent a cramped appearance and unrelated terracing from occurring.
10. The appellant has sought to address the concerns raised by the Council in response to a previous similar proposal. However, the current proposal would radically change the appearance of the appeal property, increasing its scale and form via an altered roofscape and two-storey side and rear extension. Despite the slightly recessed nature of the first-floor element away from the site's side boundary, the scale, bulk, and massing of the extension would introduce a significant built form. This would harmfully erode the open and spacious character and appearance of the plot and surrounding area. As the distance from the side boundary would be very limited and at only first-floor level, the appeal scheme's spaciousness would be reliant on the gap between No 12 and its side boundary being maintained to prevent a cramped appearance from occurring.
11. While the extant permission at No 12 retains a side space to the boundary beyond the requirements of the Local Plan, this separation distance cannot be guaranteed in perpetuity. The appeal plot is larger than others within the design group, but this pertains only to the Sylvester Avenue frontage. Thus, its size has no bearing on the spaciousness between the appeal property and its Clifford Avenue neighbour and therefore can only be afforded very minimal weight.

12. Furthermore, the side extension would be built flush with the front elevation of the house, such that it would also no longer have a stepped appearance, emphasising the absence of a gap at ground floor level. Consequently, it would lack subservience to the host dwelling. Overall, the extension would appear as a cramped form of development and result in lowered spatial standards, which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
13. The harm caused by the side extension would be exacerbated by the addition of a large porch. The porch's scale and significant front projection would appear overprominent, and unduly stand out as a significant front projection, disrupting the otherwise cohesive forms and building lines of the design group.
14. The appellant has cited comparisons with other developments in the immediate area. I do not have the full details of the circumstances of the extension on the side of 20 Clifford Avenue, therefore I cannot be certain that it represents a direct parallel to the appeal proposal, notably in respect of development plan policy. Notwithstanding this, the extension maintains a staggered appearance to its front elevation, and a space alongside the boundary with 22 Clifford Avenue. Even so, the catslide roof has not alleviated the degradation of the spatial standards resulting from the combination of this and the neighbouring extension, which extends to the side boundary. Other properties on Clifford Avenue with ground floor side elements or garages extending up to the side boundary are in most instances single-storey, so are not comparable to the appeal scheme.
15. The appellant has referred to some examples of garages forming forward projections in the surrounding area. However, these examples are located within consistent design groups where every house in the group has such a front garage. These groups comprise a different style of house to the appeal property, and the front building line differs accordingly.
16. For these reasons, the appeal scheme would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with LP Policies 6 and 37, which support development that is compatible with the surrounding area and properties regarding scale, form, and layout. As it would erode the spatial character of the locality, the proposed extension would also be contrary to LP Policy 8. Additionally, the porch would fail to accord with the guidance contained in DG5 of the Council's Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Adopted July 2023), which requires that extensions appear subservient, to prevent significant change to a property or area's character and appearance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Parker

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

S Edwards

INSPECTOR