



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 June 2024

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 JULY 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/24/3337997

35 Recreation Road, Bromley, BR2 0DY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Anthony Doughty against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/04585/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with dormer to the rear roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Shortlands Village Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

The significance of the CA

3. No 35 Recreation Road is a two-storey terraced dwelling. It lies within the Shortlands Village Conservation Area which covers the small historical local neighbourhood centre to the east of Shortlands Station encompassing Beckenham Lane and surrounding streets such as Recreation Road.
4. The CA is typified for the most part by modest Victorian built form that emerged as a result of the construction of Shortlands Station in the mid-19th Century. The Beams Historic Area Assessment report¹ states that the area is characterised by the modest stature of the housing in contrast to the far grander detached Victorian housing on the surrounding hillsides. It refers to diminutive workers cottages on Recreation Road with low ridge heights and built of London stock brick with a window on each floor. Many properties on the east side of the road feature bay windows on the ground floor, some canted and others square with tiled or leaded roofs. The significance of the CA is derived from its historical urban form and modest artisan Victorian architecture.
5. The individual homes within the terrace, including No 35, feature a mixture of architectural detailing, which conveys their artisan character. However, the terrace sits under a continuous roof profile, which, given its relative absence of alteration, is an important unifying feature of the terrace. The appeal site, and

¹ Built Environment Advisory & Management Service, Shortlands Village Historic Area Assessment, February 2020.

the wider terrace, therefore make an important contribution to the significance of the CA.

The effect of the development on the significance of the CA

6. As the proposal is located in a conservation area, the statutory duty at section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), requires that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
7. The proposed rear dormer would occupy most of the roof slope and would not be stepped down from the roof ridge. Given this, it would appear disproportionately large and bulky. It would be read as a dominant addition to the rear elevation. When viewed in conjunction with the existing rear extensions, the rear elevation of the dwelling would appear awkward and unbalanced, and the uniformity of the historic terrace would be diminished.
8. Whilst the development would not affect the streetscene, and I note that the rear gardens are fairly short, from my own observations at the site visit, it would nonetheless be visible to a number of surrounding occupiers.
9. In support of the appeal, my attention was drawn to other dormer extensions on Recreation Road and nearby streets. However, I do not know the circumstances of those cases or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. In any case, this section of the street is still predominately characterised by unaltered rear roof slopes. Therefore, these particular references do not lend any significant weight in favour of the appeal.
10. To conclude, the development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. It would conflict with Policies 6 and 37 of the Bromley Local Plan which, together, seek to ensure development and proposals for residential extensions such as dormer windows are of a high standard of design and appropriately sized. Policy 41 of the Local Plan states that proposals for development within a conservation area should preserve and enhance its characteristics and appearance.

Other Matters

11. The reasons for refusal do not refer to any adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbours. These matters were not listed in the reasons for refusal of the Council's decision notice. An absence of harm with regards to these matters is a neutral factor that would not lend any weight in support of the appeal.

Heritage Balance

12. The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') describes heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource, that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. Paragraph 205 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets.

13. Given my findings above, I find the harm to the CA to be less than substantial, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 208 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. I acknowledge that the development would allow for an increase in living space, however, this would not constitute a significant public benefit. I therefore do not consider that the public benefits of the proposal would be sufficient to outweigh the harm to the significance of the CA. Conflict therefore arises with the historic environment protection policies of the Framework.

Conclusion

15. I conclude therefore that the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan, when read as a whole. The material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
16. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR