



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 March 2024 by R Parker BSc Hons

Decision by S Edwards BA MA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/23/3329128

Timbercot, 36 Park Avenue, Farnborough, Orpington BR6 8LH

- 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 Dave Goodall against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/22/04309/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Two storey front extension with canopy porch, alterations to roof incorporating increase in ridge height, increase in chimney height with loft conversion and front dormers'.
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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 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 19 December 2023. While 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. The issues most relevant to this 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 this course of action.
4. The site is located within 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 in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the appeal property and the Farnborough Park Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site is prominently located within the Farnborough Park Conservation Area (FPCA), a 20th century suburban Arcadian estate. As set out within the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Farnborough

Park, the special interest of the Conservation Area lies in the innovative way that the Rogers family incorporated pre-existing landscape into a high quality built development". The SPG states that the latter is characterised by its unusual pattern of large, individually designed dwellings, more typical of American suburban estates. The result is a low density setting where the individual character of each property and its relationship with the landscape are paramount. Substantial front gardens are particularly prevalent on Park Avenue, and properties estate-wide are typically set within large plots. The Park has a very spacious, semi-rural feel.

7. The appeal property is a large, detached, two-storey, 20th-century dwelling in grounds of moderate size for the scale of the house and surrounding setting. The house consists of a central body with two roof dormers, flanked by forwards-projecting wings either side, resulting in a wide, U-shaped front elevation. The central portion of the house has a roof ridge set a good amount below those of the wings, creating a second U-shape, and the combination of these two forms provides a degree of visual spaciousness.
8. The property has been subject to a number of alterations and additions, but nevertheless retains some of the features reflecting its Arts and Craft character, including an interesting roofscape with prominent chimney stacks. In this context, and despite some of the alterations having eroded its original character, the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the special interest of the FPCA. The importance of this is compounded by its position at one of the main entrances to the estate, which creates part of the formative impression of the whole conservation area.
9. The appeal proposal is to both raise the central ridge line and bring forward the front elevation of the central portion, replicating its current form, including the existing dormers. The upper part of the new roof would include an additional three dormers on the front elevation and an area of flat roof behind the ridge line, creating habitable space on the second floor. Paragraph 3.19 of the SPG highlights the risk that extensions to the front and side of a property damage the strong landscape framework of the FCPA. Additionally, paragraph 3.16 states that care should be taken to ensure that roof slopes do not become over cluttered.
10. The appeal scheme has sought to address the bulk of a previously withdrawn application (Local Planning Authority Reference 21/04114/FULL6). However, the loss of the front elevation recess and lowered central ridge line would substantially reduce the current degree of visual spaciousness. Together with the proposed dormers, these alterations would appear as discordant and incongruous additions to the appeal property, resulting in a crowded roofscape, and undermining its architectural integrity.
11. The ability to appreciate the property's attractive roofscape as a result of the proposed alterations would be compromised. Furthermore, given the comparatively constrained grounds of the site, the proposal would give the appeal property a rather cramped appearance. The deleterious effect on its character and appearance would extend to that of the wider Conservation Area, particularly given Timbercot's estate entrance position.
12. As set out in section 16 of the Framework, great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. In this instance, the appeal scheme would cause less than substantial harm to the special interest of the FCPA,

which attracts considerable importance and weight against the proposal. In such circumstances, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development. The benefits of this scheme would extend only to the occupants of the property, and no public benefits which would outweigh the identified harm have been presented.

13. Following the above, the appeal scheme would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the host property and the FPCA. It therefore conflicts with Policy 41 of the Bromley Local Plan (the Local Plan) and Policy HC1 of the London Plan. These require proposals to preserve and enhance the characteristics and appearance of conservation areas, notably by respecting or complementing the layout, scale, and form of existing buildings and spaces. It also fails to meet the design aims of Policies 6 and 37 of the Local Plan, which require that proposals complement the scale, proportion, form and layout of the host dwelling and surrounding development. Proposals should contribute positively to the existing street scene and landscape, and dormer windows should be appropriate to the roofscape.

Other Matters

14. The appellant's submissions include a number of planning permissions granted nearby which, it is argued, bear similarities to the appeal scheme. Some photographs of properties located in the area were also submitted with the appeal. I do not have the full details of these schemes before me, and cannot therefore be certain that the circumstances of these developments represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. Nonetheless, after viewing the appeal site, I walked extensively across the estate and saw the properties which were mentioned within the appellant's Statement of Case. However, it is my view that the context of each is not reflective of the constrained plot within which the appeal property lies or offers a meaningful comparison with the appeal proposal. As such, these examples can only be afforded very limited weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

R Parker

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and there are no material considerations, which indicate that the appeal should be determined, other than in accordance with the development plan. On that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR