



## 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: 7 August 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/23/3329625**

**62 Borkwood Way, Orpington, Bromley BR6 9PF**

- 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 Ankush Garg against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
  - The application reference is DC/23/02398/FULL6.
  - The development proposed is described as 'Loft conversion comprising hip to gable and increase ridge by 250mm to create head height (adjoining neighbour is submitting an application to raise the ridge to the same level), rear dormer and new skylight and dormer to the front 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. The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (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.

### Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property is a modest 20<sup>th</sup> century semi-detached bungalow with a hipped roof. It has a forward projection to one side, also with a hipped roof, perpendicular to the main body of the house. The existing roof form results in a balanced and harmonious front elevation, and the property bears a form symmetrical to its attached neighbour.

6. The surrounding area is made up of houses of a similar era, grouped by matching design. The part of the road on which the appeal property is sited is characterised by a reasonable stretch of symmetrical semi-detached bungalow pairs on both sides, the vast majority of which remain largely unaltered. This gives the locality a pleasant suburban feel.
7. The proposal is for a hip to gable loft conversion with an increase in ridge height, the addition of a front rooflight and gabled front dormer, and a box dormer with Juliet balcony on the rear elevation. The Council have found no issue with the aspects of the appeal proposal pertaining to the rear elevation, and I see no reason to disagree.
8. However, the appeal scheme's proposed front elevation alterations would substantially alter the balance and harmony of its roof form, and compromise the symmetry of this pair of semi-detached bungalows. In combination, these alterations would give the property a top-heavy appearance, and result in the almost total loss of its current character. The consequent appearance of its front elevation, particularly regarding the proposed dormer, would be in jarring contrast to the surrounding bungalows of the same design. The dominant rhythm of surrounding development is one of repetition and symmetry. By interrupting this rhythm, the proposed scheme would have a negative effect on the street scene.
9. The attached neighbouring property, 60 Borkwood Way, has recently been granted planning permission for a scheme similar to this appeal (Local Planning Authority Reference DC/23/02597/FULL6). I have ascribed moderate weight to this, as it would be desirable to retain a balanced appearance to the ridge heights of the pair of dwellings. However, the neighbouring scheme does not feature a front dormer, and therefore symmetry would not be achieved were this appeal to be allowed. Thus, this permission does not outweigh the identified harm of the proposed scheme.
10. As outlined above, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Policies 6 and 37 of the Bromley Local Development Framework Local Plan (2019), which require proposals to respect the scale and form of the host dwelling and be compatible with development in the surrounding area. Furthermore, Policy 6 seeks to ensure that dormer windows are of a size and design appropriate to the roofscape and sited away from prominent roof pitches. The development as proposed does not accord with this.

### **Other Matters**

11. The appellant has highlighted some similar schemes within the wider Orpington area. Most of these schemes fall outside of the surrounding area of the appeal property and are of very limited relevance to the proposal before me, as they sit within a different context. Of relevance are the symmetrical roof alterations at 76 and 78 Borkwood Way. These properties are within the same bungalow group as the appeal site, and there are some similarities with the proposed scheme. However, the particulars of the design are different and, crucially, no front dormers have been added. I have therefore given limited weight to these particular developments.

12. The appellant submitted several photographs of properties with extensions bearing similarities to the appeal proposal. However, I do not have the full details of these schemes before me and therefore cannot be certain that their circumstances are a direct parallel to the appeal proposal, so can only give them very limited weight.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

13. 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**

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

*S Edwards*

INSPECTOR