

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2024

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 SEPTEMBER 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/24/3338582

253 Rangefield Road, Bromley, BR1 4QX

- 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 Mrs C Ashley against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is 23/02083/FULL1.
 - The development proposed is to subdivide plot at 253 Rangefield Road and create new single storey dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - Whether the proposed development would provide adequate living conditions for the future occupiers with particular regard to the internal layout, outlook and outside amenity space; and
 - The effect of the proposed development on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. No 253 Rangefield Road is a two-storey end of terrace dwelling located at the junction with Sudbury Crescent. It occupies a corner plot and has a large side garden. The area is characterised by small blocks of two-storey terraced dwellings with hipped roofs. The buildings are set-back from the road and are mostly finished with red brick. The pattern of development is typified by regular building lines and heights as well as open corner plots which create a sense of spaciousness throughout the area.
4. The footprint of the proposed dwelling, shaped like a concave polygon, would occupy most of the side garden of No 253. It would feature an element of flat roof and a half-pitched roof which would be at odds with the surrounding built form. The length of the building along Rangefield Road would also be significant. Given this, the development would appear as an awkward and discordant feature.

5. I appreciate that development should not necessarily be a reproduction of the established form and pattern of development. However, its contemporary design would fail to sufficiently harmonise with its surroundings. It would appear clumsy and would jar with the scale, proportions and symmetrical layout of the surrounding built fabric.
6. Because of its position within the corner plot, it would appear prominently in the street scene. Although single storey in height, the ridge height of the roof would still reach the same height as the eaves of No 253. Given the length of the building, there would be a considerable amount of roofscape. The proposed dwelling would therefore not be discreet. It would constitute a bulky and incongruous addition to the streetscene. Furthermore, it would reduce the spaciousness of the corner plot and erode the open character of the area.
7. Given the above, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies 4 and 37 of the Bromley Local Plan (2019) (BLP), Policies D4 and D6 of the London Plan (2021), the Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (2023) (SPG) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (the 'Framework') which together seek to ensure new developments achieve a high standard of design and respect local character and spatial standards.

Living Conditions

8. The Council's Decision Notice and Officer Report state that the internal layout would not be adequate and that the living conditions of the future occupiers would be harmed because of deficient outlook. However, the Council's Statement of Case clarifies that the key concern relates to the proposed outdoor amenity space. In the interest of clarity and to be thorough, I find that the internal layout would be unusual but would not be unacceptably inadequate. Also, the outlook from the proposed windows would be satisfactory.
9. There would be thin rectangular strips of land surrounding the dwelling but no obvious outside area useable as a garden or amenity space. The space to the rear would be too cramped whilst the space to the front, which would also be small and narrow, would abut the public footpath and would thus lack privacy.
10. Whilst there are public parks and allotments nearby that would be within walking distance, they do not compensate for the lack of *private* outside amenity space such as a rear garden and patio area.
11. The outside amenity space would be inappropriately limited due to its shape and size. The proposed development would therefore fail to provide adequate living standards for the future occupiers with regard to the lack of a useable outside amenity space. It would thus conflict with Policies 4 and 37 of the BLP, Policies D4 and D6 of the London Plan, the SPG and the Framework which together seek to ensure new housing is well-designed, with functional layouts and sufficient external, private amenity space that is accessible and practical.

Highway Safety

12. The appeal site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 2. The Council states that the proposal should provide a minimum of one off-street parking spaces to serve both No 253 and the proposed house. The

London Plan stipulates up to 0.75 parking spaces for the existing and proposed dwellings.

13. On my site visit, I observed that there are high levels of parking demand in the area. It is not clear from the proposed plans whether a parking space would be provided for the proposed dwelling. However, the appellant does state that the existing parking space associated with No 253 would be removed.
14. The loss of one existing off-street parking space would not comply with parking standards. Furthermore, in the absence of a parking survey and sufficient information regarding parking provision for the proposed dwelling, I cannot accurately assess the impact of the proposal on highway safety. The failure to provide off-street parking spaces would likely increase pressure on parking in the surrounding streets. It could increase the risk of illegal or unsuitable parking and hazardous manoeuvring. This could therefore pose a risk to vehicular and pedestrian safety.
15. Accordingly, the development would harm highway safety and would therefore conflict with Policies 30 and 32 of the BLP and Policies T6 and T6.1 of the London Plan which together seek to ensure proposals meet residential parking standards and do not have an adverse impact on road safety.

Planning Balance

16. The Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The proposed development would harm the character and appearance and highway safety of the area and would not provide adequate living conditions for the future occupiers. It would not be in accordance with the aforementioned policies of the BLP. For these reasons, the development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
17. The Council states that the five-year housing land supply in Bromley was 3.38 years (August 2023), which is a significant level of undersupply. Paragraph 11 (d) of the Framework explains that in these circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
18. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing. Other provisions of the Framework observe that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement. The proposed dwelling would make a positive contribution to housing supply with associated social and economic benefits during the period of construction and once the dwelling is occupied. However, the scale of development proposed means the contribution of one single additional dwelling to meeting housing need in Bromley through a more efficient use of land in an urban area and the associated benefits would be limited.
19. In the particular circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the effect on the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of future occupants and on highway safety conflict with policies of the Framework. Consequently, the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.

21. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR