



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 04 December 2024

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/24/3352999

36 Glebe House Drive, Hayes, Bromley BR2 7BN

- 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 Dr and Ms K & K Bronis & Sifakaki against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/01638/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is part one/two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, two storey front infill extension including porch canopy and addition of side roof window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In support of this appeal an additional assessment relating to the impact on trees has been submitted. This additional information has been produced to inform the appeal process. However, there is no evidence that it has been subject of consultations, such as through the Council's planning application formal consultation process. If I determine the appeal on the basis of the additional tree assessment it is possible that the interests of parties who might wish to comment would be prejudiced, including that of the Council's arboricultural adviser. For this reasons, I have not had regard to this additional tree assessment.
3. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework has been published since the planning application was determined by the Council. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on: -
 - a) The character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area; and
 - b) Trees

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. Glebe House Drive is predominantly characterised by uniform pairs of semi-detached properties with symmetrical design. The properties on the eastern side, which includes the appeal property, have two storey wings to the side which are set back from the front of the property at first floor. These two storey wings are physically and visually subservient to that of the front gables of the properties. At ground floor the existing single storey pitched roof front entrance porches further add to the character of these dwellings. The uniformity of the street scene creates a pleasing appearance to the development within this locality that gives the area distinctiveness and a sense of place.
6. The proposed front extension would bring the front wall of this existing two storey wing in line with the wall of the existing front gable. This would bring about an uncharacteristic change to the appearance of the host property and to that of the existing street scene. Further to this, an open front entrance porch canopy extending forward of the front gable would also be an uncharacteristic change. These changes would undermine the character and symmetry of the pair of dwellings within the street scene. As such, the proposal would appear harmful within the existing context of development within this area. Whilst I acknowledge this part of the proposed development would represent a relatively small change, which would include a replicated circular window, it would have a noticeable and harmful effect on the character and appearance of the property and the street scene. I disagree with the appellant's comment that the proposed change would scarcely register visibly in the street scene.
7. Alterations have occurred on other neighbouring properties within Glebe House Drive, including that of the adjoining property No.34. However, whilst the ground floor porch has been enclosed, the two storey wing to the side retains its setback from the front of the property at first floor. No.19 opposite hosts the addition of a large side facing dormer. Whilst this has brought about change to the appearance of No.19 it is not the same form of extension as that proposed here.
8. On Hayes Wood Avenue, No.45, 51 and 53 have front infill extensions very similar to that proposed here. I have been provided photographs of those examples and plans and Council offer reports relating to those extensions at Nos.45 and 51. I acknowledge there is similarity as those properties hosted two storey wings to the side set back from the front of the property at first floor. Those proposals granted planning permission for the side wings to be brought forward bring the front wall of this existing two storey wing in line with the wall of the existing front gable. In those cases, the Council did not consider those extensions to be at odds with the host dwelling or wider street scene in general. However, whilst I acknowledge the nature of those extensions are similar to that proposed here, they relate to a different street scene and the Council made an assessment with regard to the context of that street scene. Consideration can and should be given to the character and appearance of this street scene.
9. Nos 11, 13 and 15 Glebe Hall Road have enclosed the side porches. However, those porches remain single storey and do not project forward of the front gable.

10. No objections to the proposal have been received from local residents. Whilst this is a merit of the scheme it does not overcome my above concerns or justify the proposed development.
11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policies 6 and 37 of the Bromley Local Plan 2019. These policies seek, amongst other matters, development, including extensions, to be of a high quality design that respect the scale and form of the host dwelling and are compatible with surrounding development.

Trees

12. The Council has identified two trees adjacent to the appeal site to be high value trees. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment that supported the planning application indicates that pile and beam foundations would be utilised in the construction process. However, whilst noting the figures provided for the encroachment into the root protection area (RPA) within the documentation submitted in support of the application, the Council indicates that these encroachments could be potentially more harmful than if they were at the outer edge of the RPA. Furthermore, the Council contend that regardless of the proportion of the RPA that would be encroached upon, there is a significant risk of harm. The use of pile and beam foundations does not necessarily reduce the risk of a deterioration of soil conditions.
13. In addition, if the ground is covered by development gaseous exchange and rainwater infiltration could be impeded. Covering of the soil within the rooting area of trees would potentially cause a deterioration of rooting condition that could affect the long term health of the trees. There would be future development encroachment that could affect these trees.
14. The house is already there and the Council accept these trees have already been subject to extensive asymmetrical pruning in order to prevent loss of light and leaf litter falling on the garden. Notwithstanding such tree works, the trees are an attractive feature within the street scene and are of high amenity values for this reason. This makes it all the more important to protect the trees from harm to ensure their longevity is not undermined. The premature loss of these trees would have a negative and significant visual impact in the street scene.
15. I cannot be certain that the trees would not be harmed as a result of the proposed development and/or that their long-term protection would be sufficiently secured. The proposed development, therefore, has a significant potential to negatively impact upon the trees and have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing in the long-term. As a consequence, the proposal should be resisted.
16. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development could be harmful to the existing trees. As such, this brings the proposal into conflict with Policies 73 and 74 of the Bromley Local Plan. These policies seek, amongst other matters, development to take particular account of existing trees that are of interest visually and are considered desirable to be retained.

Conclusion

17. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR