



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: 20 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/24/3347682

3 Denbridge Road, Bickley, Bromley BR1 2AG

- 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 & Mrs Fitzsimmons against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/04293/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is demolition and reconstruction of front boundary wall with two new vehicular gates & native hedging, and formation of grass verge.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Front boundary wall building works were underway at the appeal site at the time of my visit. It is not clear whether such works would conform with the plans that are subject of this appeal. I have therefore considered the proposal on the basis of the plans that are before me.
3. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 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 the character and appearance of the existing locally listed dwelling and surrounding area and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bickley Park Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

5. Bickley Park CA is of significance as a late Victorian and Edwardian development with houses by architects such as Ernest Newton and C.H.B. Quennell. The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Bickley Park CA identifies the area as typified by large, elegant houses set individually amid mature trees on spacious plots along curving roads, which convey a somewhat rural impression. Bickley Park SPG indicates that the estate provides a good illustration of the evolution of the Arts and Crafts style development. It has the impression of individual buildings sitting comfortably within a park-like setting.

6. The area is clearly of architectural and historic value and this makes the area special, and worthy of its CA status. The host dwelling forms part of the special character and appearance of this developments style. No doubt for this reason the property has been locally listed for its special and notable characteristics and its contribution to the CA.
7. The frontages to the street have a major impact upon the appearance of the CA and this can be appreciated from the public realm. The development within this CA, the character and appearance of this area including its layout, gives this area architectural significance. The locally listed appeal property, with its front boundary, falls within this CA and, therefore, forms part of its significance.
8. The SPG for Bickley Park CA seeks to retain existing boundary treatments and gates and to maintain original elements in a good condition. Where new or replacement frontage treatments are proposed the SPG requires these to reflect the height, scale, materials and detailing that is evident locally. It also notes that in the Bickley Park CA hedges are the most appropriate frontage treatments as this would reinforce the impression of a semi-rural, woodland setting that is central to the concept of the estate.
9. Generally, the area hosts low front boundaries some including railings and/or vegetation whilst others are vegetated. These frontages make a significant visual contribution to both the character and appearance of the area. The proposed front boundary wall, piers and gates would represent a tall boundary feature uncharacteristic to the existing frontage boundaries in the area. Such a feature would be markedly out of keeping within this area and would erode the established and historic open character and appearance of the estate.
10. The proposed front boundary would therefore create an unsympathetic addition to the estate. It would cause harm to the character and appearance of the listed host property and would not bring about a positive visual impact to the wider character or appearance of the Bickley Park CA. Whilst CAs are not a museum I do not find that the proposed changes to be acceptable within this CA for the above reasons.
11. Given the size and scale of the proposal in the CA, I consider there would be less than substantial harm to the character or appearance of the CA and its significance. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the Framework, I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would provide a potentially more secure boundary at the front of the property but this would be limited to providing a personal benefit for the appellant. There would be no clear benefit to the public that would sufficiently outweigh the harm identified. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would fail to accord with national policy.
12. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing locally listed dwelling and surrounding area and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bickley Park CA. The proposal would, therefore conflict with Policies 37, 39 and 41 of the Bromley Local Plan and the SPG for Bickley Park CA. These policies and SPG seek, amongst other matters, development to be of a high quality design, be sympathetic to the character, appearance and special interest of locally listed buildings and to preserve or enhance the characteristics or appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

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

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR