



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2025

by I A Dyer BSc (Eng) FCIHT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 JANUARY 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/24/3348944

29 Willett Way, Petts Wood, Orpington, Bromley BR5 1QB

- 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 and Mrs Baker against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application reference is DC/24/01626/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and construction of a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Following the Council's decision on the application that led to this appeal, an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in December 2024 and is a material consideration in decision-taking from the date of its issue. However, the changes to the Framework have not significantly altered national planning policy in regard to the matters in dispute in this appeal and how they are considered in planning terms. Thus, I consider that no prejudice would occur to any parties as a result of me taking the Framework into account in my assessment of the appeal's merits.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. 29 Willett Way (No 29) is a semi-detached two storey dwellinghouse lying within the Petts Wood Area of Special Residential Character (the ASRC), an established residential area. It contains a mix of detached and semi-detached two storey dwellings of various designs, but with a general consistency of materials and finishes. The dwellings lie in generous plots set back from the road behind substantial front gardens, which creates a consistent building line. Generally, where side extensions have not been added, the dwellings are set back from the boundary, often with a single storey garage interposed.
5. Whilst some of the houses in the wider area have been altered by the addition of dormer windows and side extensions, the semi-detached dwellings nonetheless exhibit a very high degree of symmetry in their pairings. Within the ASRC the regularity of building lines, the consistency in the roof lines, largely untouched by

roof extensions or conversions, and the symmetry between pairs and neighbouring pairs of houses are positive features which give the area a general feeling of spaciousness and consistency, contributing to the character and appearance of the area.

6. Given the symmetric design of the pair of which it is a part, and its set-back away from the boundary with its interposed garage, No 29 makes a positive, reinforcing contribution to the area's character and appearance.
7. The proposal would demolish the garage and build a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension. Further, the proposal would infill the existing porch. The proposal would be carried out in materials that would match those of the main dwelling and its neighbours. There would be no views of the rear extension from the public realm and only limited private views of it. Whilst visible from the public realm, the infilling of the porch would not significantly alter the appearance of the host dwelling. I find, therefore, that these aspects of the proposal would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area.
8. The side extension would be set back from the existing front façade of the dwellinghouse and its ridge height marginally lower. This would provide a degree of subservience to the side extension. It would, nonetheless, disrupt the symmetry of the pair of conjoined dwellings and the scale of the enlarged dwelling would overwhelm its partner. This disruption will undermine the balanced appearance of the pair that I have identified above as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the ASRC.
9. Coupled with this, the side extension with significantly reduce the gap between the dwellinghouse and the boundary, undermining the spaciousness of the area which I have identified above as being a positive feature. This harmful reduction in spaciousness would be clearly visible to passersby in the area.
10. Whilst the adjacent property currently retains its detached garage, and setback from the boundary, were such extensions to proliferate, there would be further harm to the defining positive characteristics and appearance of the area. Having regard to its scale, siting and appearance, the proposal would undermine the composition of the pair of semi-detached dwellings and would appear out of character with other semi-detached dwellings that contribute to the area.
11. Bringing these matters together I find that the proposal would harmfully undermine characteristics of the ASRC that I have found to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
12. My attention has been drawn to an extension at 1 Princes Avenue¹, which lies within the ASRC and was permitted at appeal, which the appellants consider comparable to the proposal before me. Whilst this extension is visually very similar and extends the dwelling close to its side boundary, that site lies on a junction. Further, the gap left between the extension in that case, and the property boundary is significantly greater than would be the case at No 29. Thus, that development does not reduce a gap between properties and thus its impact on spaciousness is not contextually comparable to that of the appeal proposal.

¹ PINS Ref: APP/G5180/D/13/2209655

13. The appellants have further drawn my attention to an appeal decision² at 36 Willett Way which would add a side extension to a detached dwelling, replacing a detached garage. Whilst I note the conclusion of the Inspector in that case that “the extensions have been well designed and would retain adequate separation to flank boundaries”, the host dwelling is a detached house. Thus, that proposal would not undermine a complimentary pair of semi-detached dwellings, as in the case before me, and is thus so significantly differs in context that it does not provide a direct comparison to the proposal before me. I have, in any case, determined this appeal on its own merits.
14. I note that the proposal would use materials matching those of the host dwelling and features, such as hipped roofs, which appear in local architectural vernacular. However, such design features would not, in this case, reduce the effect of the massing and position of the proposal so as to negate the harm that I have identified.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. It would, therefore, be contrary to policies 6, 37 and 44 of the London Borough of Bromley Local Plan (2019) which, together, seek to ensure that, amongst other things, development positively contributes to the existing street scene, respects, enhances and strengthens the special distinctive qualities of the ASRCs, and respects and is compatible with development in the surrounding area.

Other Matter

16. I note the expressions in support of the proposal from local residents. However, I have determined that appeal with regard to current local and national planning policy and guidance.

Conclusion

17. 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. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

I A Dyer

INSPECTOR

² PINS Ref: APP/G5180/D/18/3207175