



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2020

by P W Clark MA(Oxon) MA(TRP) MRTPI MCMi

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/W/20/3245546
226 Collingwood Road, Sutton SM1 2NX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Brett Mills against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - The application Ref DM2019/01558, dated 13 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of replacement flank extension to provide a one person studio flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The sole main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene. As the Council's officer report notes (and I agree), "the development of the site for a residential use would be acceptable in land use terms." This proposal represents the third attempt at finding an acceptable way to put that conclusion into effect.
3. Nos 224-234(even) Collingwood Road, together with Alexandra Avenue at their rear, form an estate of originally consistent design. It consists mostly of terraces of four houses under hipped roofs, each with handed and paired two-storey bay windows with curved ends under flat roofs. The design of the estate is distinct from, though compatible with, other development along Collingwood Road.
4. At the entrance to Alexandra Avenue stand numbers 224-234 (even) Collingwood Road, comprising a terrace of four to the north of the junction and a semi-detached pair, including the appeal site, to the south. The ensemble is not symmetrical either side of the junction but the terrace on one side and the pair on the other are placed an equal distance apart on either side of the Alexandra Avenue carriageway, so that there is symmetry at the junction itself.
5. The flanks of 226 and 228, on either side of Alexandra Avenue do not align with the building line in the Avenue itself. They are positioned closer to the carriageway, so that they narrow the vista at the entrance to Alexandra Avenue but they do not rise from the back edge of the pavement. Space is left (including the site of the appeal proposal), thus providing a more open view into the Avenue.

6. It was this open characteristic which was one of the determining issues leading to the dismissal of a previous appeal for a two storey dwelling on the present appeal site in November 2018 (APP/P5870/W/18/3203342). Another was the way that that proposal would have unbalanced the symmetry of the semi-detached pair of which it formed a part.
7. Time moves on. Since that decision, number 226 Collingwood Road has been the subject of a hip to gable loft conversion. This has two consequences. Firstly, it means that the semi-detached pair is no longer symmetrical and so, one of the arguments in the previous appeal decision no longer applies. Secondly, the resulting edifice has the appearance of being an incomplete section of a longer terrace, crying out for completion by the addition of a two-storey building on the current appeal site. Although that observation does not negate concerns about the effects of such a proposal on the open characteristics of the entrance to Alexandra Avenue, it is relevant to a consideration of the contribution which the current appeal proposal would make to the character and appearance of the location.
8. The current appeal proposal would be single storey, like the existing structure on site and like the proposed single storey side and rear extension which has just been given planning permission (DM2020/00096). However, in contrast to both those fall-back positions which align with the front façade of the main body of the house, the appeal proposal would project forward to align with the front of the projecting bay windows of the main house.
9. The façade would curve back towards an entrance door in the plane of the entrance door of the existing house. On plan, this mimics the plan form of the curved bay windows of the existing house. But, in elevation, the two storey bay windows of the existing house are capped by a flat roof sitting tight above the head of the first floor windows, emphasising the bay's independence from the main structure behind. By contrast the curved façade of the appeal proposal would continue above the head of the windows, thus giving the appearance of being an unfinished part of a two-storey house. This unfinished appearance is compounded by the form of the roof proposed which would not follow the curve of the façade but would oversail the space in front of the proposed new front door. This would form a porch to the front door but at a much higher level than the canopies over the front doors of the existing houses which align with the heads of the ground floor windows and so would give the impression that it was just a temporary lid put upon a work in progress.
10. I conclude that the unfinished appearance of the proposed side extension, together with the unfinished appearance of the main house now that it has a hip to gable conversion would give a visually unsatisfactory result on this key site which forms a gateway to Alexandra Avenue. It would be at odds with the fully resolved architecture of surrounding development. It would not comply with Sutton Local Plan policy 28 (a) which requires development to be designed to the highest standard, especially with regard to architectural detail, and so I dismiss the appeal.

P. W. Clark

Inspector