

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2016

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 27 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/16/3156075

450 Wingletye Lane, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3DA

- 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 Lee Brown against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0450.16, dated 24 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as "*Proposed works consist of a first floor extension above existing with pitched roof over. Conversion of the existing loft space to add further bedroom with rear dormer window leading to proposed en-suite bathroom within new loft space over proposed first floor side extension. All finishes and materials used will match the existing where ever possible. Existing drainage routes and down pipes to be connected into for new bathroom waste*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is an end of terrace, two-storey dwelling located on the corner of Wingletye Lane with Grassmere Avenue. It has a single-storey extension to the side that adjoins the back edge of the site's return boundary along Grassmere Avenue.
 4. There have been a number of planning applications made with reference to this property in the past. Planning permission was refused in September 2011 for what was described as a 'first floor side extension'. A subsequent appeal (Ref: APP/B5480/D/11/2165640) was dismissed in February 2012 (Appeal A). In October 2012 planning permission was granted on appeal (Ref: APP/B5480/D/12/2182303) for what was also described as a 'first floor side extension' (Appeal B).
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5. In Appeal A the proposal was to project the existing form of the dwelling sideways over the single-storey extension and right up to the back edge of the pavement along Grassmere Avenue. The Inspector found conflict with the Council's *Residential Extensions and Alterations* Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which was adopted in 2011. This aims to provide clear design guidance in order to bring forward residential extensions that are sympathetic to an existing property and the street scene. In relation to terraced properties it advises that side extensions should normally continue the existing building line of the front elevation. It also goes on to state that for corner properties the flank wall of side extensions must be set back at least one metre from the back edge of the footway. It was with regard to this conflict that the Inspector found the proposal would dominate the entrance to Grassmere Avenue in a manner that would be prominent and discordant within the general street scene.
6. In Appeal B the earlier objection was addressed by setting the flank wall of the first floor extension back from Grassmere Avenue by 1m. The Inspector in that case found the subservient design that was put forward, which also included a 0.5m setback from the dwelling's front elevation, would cause no significant harm to the character or appearance of the area.
7. The current proposal is a marriage of both previous schemes but with the further addition of a dormer window to the rear. The side extension would be recessed behind the dwelling's front elevation, consistent with that previously permitted, but would extend right up to the back edge of the pavement along Grassmere Avenue. When seen 'head on' the extension would display a degree of subservience in relation to the original dwelling due to its recessed position and slightly lower ridge height. Its reasonable width would ensure that it would be a proportionate addition to the original dwelling and I share the appellant's view that this element of the proposal would not be an unreasonably large structure. However, although it would not quite extend for the full height and depth of the building, as was the case in Appeal A, the result would be a building that would still present a two-storey mass of built form immediately abutting the pavement.
8. The Council's SPD remains relevant and in tune with a core planning principle of the more recent National Planning Policy Framework, which is to always seek to secure high quality design. The relationship of the side extension with the property's return side boundary indicates that there would be clear conflict with the Council's SPD and, despite the passage of some time, there is no compelling reason for me to now depart from the Appeal A Inspector's findings in relation to a not too dissimilar proposal. It would remain to be the case that, because of its size and position, the extension would dominate the entrance to Grassmere Avenue, appearing overbearing in relation to its scale, and that it would be prominent and discordant within the street scene.
9. Section 8 of the SPD deals specifically with roof extensions, loft conversions and dormer windows. It advises that dormer windows should normally be located facing the rear garden, the principal reason being so that they are not visible from the street and do not harm the appearance or character of the original house. It also advises that they should be contained well within the body of the roof, by being set well back from the eaves, set well in from the sides including any gables or party walls, and well below the ridge line. It goes

on to state that all windows at roof level, particularly dormers, should relate to the windows of the original house in proportion, design and position and that dormers with pitched roofs are preferred.

10. Given the corner location of the appeal property the rear elevation of No 450 is highly visible in the street scene from Grassmere Avenue. The dormer would be well set in from the sides of the extended property and would be set below the original dwelling's ridge and above the eaves. However, it would extend into the roof of the proposed extension and in so doing would fail to respect the scale or form of the original dwelling. In addition its flat roof would extend almost up to the ridge height of the extension and its windows would be of different proportions to those on the main body of the house and positioned out of kilter in relation to them. There are a number of elements to the dormer that would conflict with the guidelines within the SPD and my overall impression is that it would appear as a large and dominant feature within the rear roof slope of the dwelling. It would show little respect for the scale and form of the original building and would appear highly visible within the street scene.
11. I have noted the appellant's view that the building costs of completing the development along the lines of the permitted scheme would not be economically feasible for the space that would be created. However, my decision has been reached having regard to the long-term visual impact of the development in the wider public interest.
12. My attention has been drawn to a photograph of a property that has been extended to the side and rear abutting the back edge of a pavement, broadly similar to the appeal proposal. However, I have no knowledge of the property's location or the circumstances of that case. During my visit I saw no development within the immediate area of the appeal site that was comparable to the proposal that is before me, which I have, in any event, considered on its own merits.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As such it would conflict with Policy DC61 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD, adopted in 2008, which requires development to maintain, enhance or improve the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, including the absence of any objections from any other interested parties to the proposal, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR