

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2016

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/16/3157037

63 Thirleby Road, Edgware, HA8 0HA

- 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 Ms L Henry against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 16/1039/HSE, dated 1 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing detached garage; two storey side/rear extension and single storey rear conservatory; new terrace at rear; installation of disabled access ramp to front and associated alterations to front driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I use the Council's description of development which is more concise than the planning application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a nicely proportioned, two storey, semi detached, dwelling set, characteristically, diagonally on a prominent corner plot. It is on a 1920's estate of generally established residential character with a range of broadly similar homes which, along with associated soft landscape, come together to form an area of pleasing appearance. The appeal property adjoins grander and more ornate Primary School buildings with continuity of materials and an element of space making the transition a smooth one in visual terms. The appeal proposal is as described above.
 5. The site lies within the Watling Estate Conservation Area. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a
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Conservation Area (CA). Policy DM6 of the Barnet Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (2012) (DMP) reflects this amongst its wider content.

6. The diagonal siting, the space around, the elevational treatment and the symmetry of the pairs of dwellings are such distinctive and attractive characteristics of corners found in this locality that their safeguarding is very justified in planning terms. Unfortunately the appeal proposal would run contrary to this protection. The scheme would lead to a disjointed two storey appearance, would markedly reduce the sense of space, would overly impact upon the existing elevations and would noticeably lessen the symmetry with the adjoining home. It would appear out of place relative to the presently broadly 'mirror image' across the road and would read as excessive bulk and general over-development even allowing for the removal of the existing garage.
7. In this particular instance the neighbouring school adds further to the need to keep a degree of openness on this corner and alongside this principal building. The substantial school is symmetrical in its front elevation and visually benefits from the space to either end, particularly at upper level. The appeal scheme would unduly intrude upon this at its south eastern side. The planned new build would detract from the qualities which the school building brings to the local scene.
8. Policy DM01 of the DMP and Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy (2012), taken together and amongst other matters, call for suitably scaled high quality design sympathetic to a site's wider setting and ensuring protection of local distinctiveness and character generally. I conclude that the appeal scheme would run contrary to these policies. Furthermore, there would be conflict with the objectives of the Authority's Residential Design Guidance SPD and the Watling Estate Conservation Area Character Appraisal Statement which reflect these policy aims. The scheme would also run contrary to the aims of S72(1) of the Act and Policy DM6 of the DMP because there would not be preservation or enhancement of character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Other matters

9. I do sympathise with the wish to provide a 'granny annex' and recognise the benefits that this would bring to the family as a whole. I can see that the ground floor accommodation has been thoughtfully planned. However, the upper floor accommodation goes beyond what is needed for a disabled occupant, albeit clearly there would be space gains in terms of family bedrooms. Although I conclude that the scheme would be too large and misplaced I can see that the designer has taken care in terms of matching windows, pitched roofs and materials and I appreciate that the Appellant has offered some amendments to seek to find common ground with the Council, albeit these were relatively minor in my opinion. I agree that there would not be harm to neighbours' amenity.
10. I noted a number of other extensions locally but did not see any which directly compared to the appeal proposal in terms of design, siting, scale or location. In any event I must assess the case before me on its own merits.

11. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issues identified above.
12. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) have been considered. Key objectives of the Framework are to protect and enhance the qualities of the natural and built environment as well as to safeguard heritage assets; development plan policies which I cite mirror these. The Framework underlines that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. The appeal proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset however what public benefits there would be, such as construction employment or care savings, would not outweigh this harm. Furthermore there are no other benefits, including to the Appellant, which to my mind would be of a scale to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area which I have identified.

Overall conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond
INSPECTOR