



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2016

by J F Powis BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 04 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/16/3154929

35 Richmond Road, New Barnet, Barnet EN5 1SF

- 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 George Paraskeva against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 16/2429/HSE, dated 13 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is an extension to front bay window, two storey side extension, two storey and single storey rear extension and incorporation of certificate of lawfulness approved roof extension and alteration of the front garden to incorporate an additional off road parking space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area; and,
 - the living conditions of the occupants of 33A Richmond Road, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached house dating from the 1930s. There is some variety in the age and style of properties in this part of Richmond Road, but most are substantial detached or semi-detached dwellings set in generous gardens. There is a considerable downhill slope in the road from west to east meaning that the appeal property sits slightly above its attached dwelling at no.37 and there is an unusual 'split roof' feature where the two houses join. Notwithstanding this, nos.35 and 37 retain the appearance of being a pair, with consistent use of materials and a mirrored arrangement of the main features on the front elevation, including two storey bay windows projecting under half hipped roofs.
 4. The proposed development involves extensions to the side, rear and roof of the appeal property. The aspects of the proposal cited in the Council's grounds for refusal in relation to the effect on character and appearance are the two storey side extension and the ground floor front bay window extension.
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5. The house adjoining the appeal property at no.37 has had a hip to gable roof extension while the appeal property retains its original hipped roof. There therefore currently exists some asymmetry between the two semi-detached houses. A lawful development certificate appears to exist for a hip to gable and rear dormer loft extension to the appeal property. The proposed development also includes a hip to gable roof extension which may be seen to improve the degree of symmetry in roof styles between the two properties. However this, combined with the two storey side extension also proposed where none exists at no.37, would result in the appeal property becoming significantly wider than its adjoining house, undermining the appearance of the original pair of semi-detached houses.
6. This would be compounded by the proposed design of the front elevation of the side extension, which would extend the width of the existing ground floor bay window by approximately 2m whilst the first floor element would be recessed with a circular window. I do not consider that the uncharacteristically wide front bay window would be sympathetic to the appearance of the original house. Moreover, it would have the effect of further unbalancing the pair of semi-detached houses of which the appeal property forms part.
7. On my visit I saw that a degree of separation is maintained between buildings on the northern side of Richmond Road which allows glimpses between properties of mature trees and planting in the rear gardens beyond. This contributes to a sense of spaciousness in the street scene. The proposed two storey side extension would bring the side of the appeal property close to the wall marking the shared boundary with the adjacent bungalow at no.33A. Allowance is made for a pedestrian walkway to the side of the extension, however the boundary between no.33A and no.35 is not straight, with the appeal site tapering slightly when moving from the front to the rear of the site. As a result, the plans indicate that the gap between the side extension and the existing boundary wall would be approximately 765mm at the front of the extension, reducing to approximately 609mm at its narrowest point.
8. I consider that narrowing the gap between the appeal property and no.33A so considerably would lose the sense of separation between the properties that is an important characteristic of the street. Whilst the front of the appeal property is reasonably set back from the road, the front boundary is marked by only a low brick wall with modest ironwork above. As a result, the proposals would be clearly visible from public viewpoints on the street and would therefore erode the established pattern of the built form in this part of Richmond Road.
9. Taking all of these matters together, I conclude that the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. Consequently, it would be contrary to policies DM01 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (September 2012), Policies CS NPPF, CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2012), and the Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance (April 2013), which together seek to ensure that development proposals respect local character and the appearance of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets.

Living Conditions

10. The detached bungalow at 33A Richmond Road sits to the west of the appeal property. A single storey rear extension to the bungalow runs along a significant

part of the shared boundary and minimises views toward the rear of the appeal property from no.33A and its garden.

11. The bungalow has an approximate L-shaped layout such that the main part of the building sits further back in its plot than the appeal property. As a result, the proposed two storey side extension would be visible from windows on the front elevation of the bungalow and an easterly facing side window on the projecting front gable end feature. I note, however, that to some extent this is already the outlook from these windows. The proposal would bring the appeal property approximately 1.89m closer to the boundary but the bungalow is set away from the boundary by the width of its single garage. This would assist in retaining some distance from the proposed extension for occupants of the bungalow.
12. The side extension would be of two storey height, and would significantly increase the bulk of the roof form closest to no.33A due to the hip to gable extension. However, this would be partly mitigated by the slope in this part of the road, whereby no.33A sits approximately 1.2m higher than the appeal property at the shared boundary, with a difference in ground floor slab height of approximately 2.2m. Having regard to all of these matters, I consider that the proposed side extension would not appear as unacceptably large or intrusive when viewed from within the bungalow at no.33.
13. As a result, I conclude that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of occupants of 33A Richmond Road with regard to outlook. I therefore find no conflict with Policies DM01 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (September 2012), Policies CS NPPF, CS1 of Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2012), and the Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance (April 2013), insofar as they seek to protect the outlook of occupiers neighbouring new development.

Other Matters

Benefits of the Proposal

14. I appreciate that the proposed development would allow additional internal space for the appellant's family, bringing social benefits. It would also generate economic benefits in terms of sustaining employment and business activity in the construction sector. These are matters that weigh in favour of the proposal. However, these benefits do not outweigh the unacceptable harm in terms of character and appearance that I have identified above.

Conclusions

15. I have found no harm to the living conditions of the occupants of 33A Richmond Road. However, this does not overcome the harm that I have identified in terms of the character and appearance of the site and surroundings. For the reasons given above I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J F Powis

INSPECTOR