The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2016

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 16 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/16/3154747
24 Queen's Avenue, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 2LF

- 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 Andy Kelly against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
- The application Ref P/1663/16, dated 31 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2016.
- The development is single storey rear infill extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey rear infill extension at 24 Queen's Avenue, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 2LF in accordance with the terms of the application ref P/1663/16 dated 31 March 2016.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application seeks permission for a single storey rear extension. On my visit I saw that the works have been completed. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on the basis that what is sought is retrospective permission for the extension.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal site, and of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site at 24 Queen's Avenue is located within a predominantly residential area. No 24 forms one of a pair of semi-detached bungalows.

5. Single storey extensions have previously been added to the side and rear of the property. The rear extension, built under prior approval, is approximately 5m deep. The extension which is the subject of the appeal infills the corner gap left between these two previous extensions, essentially completing a wrap-around of the south-east corner of the dwelling. The Council is concerned that, cumulatively, all three additions would be overly bulky and disproportionate to the original building, failing to respect its scale and character, and failing to respect the prevailing character of the surrounding area.

6. The Council's document entitled 'Supplementary Planning Document - Residential Design Guide' (SPD, December 2010) states that, in the case of a semi-detached dwelling, single storey rear extensions of a depth of up to 3m may not need planning permission. However, where permission is required, an acceptable depth may be determined against a number of criteria, including consistency with permitted development, site considerations, the scale of the development, impact on neighbours, and the established character of the area and the pattern of development.

7. In this case, the new extension extends to the same depth as the existing rear extension and matches its materials and design. It also meets the height of the adjoining single storey elements. At approximately 1.3m in width, the new extension is a modest addition in comparison to the scale of the existing rear and side extensions. In terms of wider impact, the new extension occupies a discreet position which is not readily visible from the neighbours to the east or west. It therefore does not affect the amenity of neighbours. It is not visible from the wider street scene on Queen's Avenue, and its impact on the character of the surrounding area is limited.

8. I accept that, taken as a whole, the rear and side extensions to No 24 represent a sizeable addition to the original building. However, drawing the above factors together, I am unable to conclude that the new extension in itself is so harmful to the character or appearance of the appeal site or the surrounding area as to warrant the withholding of planning permission.

9. I therefore find that the development does not conflict with Policy CS 1(B) of the Harrow Core Strategy (February 2012), insofar as it resists proposals that would harm the character of suburban areas. It complies with Policy DM 1 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies Local Plan (July 2013), which sets out design and layout considerations for all development, and policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (March 2015), which respectively seek to protect local character, and set out guidelines for new architecture. The development also accords with the criteria set out in the SPD.

10. My attention has been drawn to two appeal decisions within the Borough, extracts of which have been submitted. The first[1] dealt with what appears to be a larger extension of approximately 6m in depth, and I note that the proposal abutted the boundary of the plot, which is not the case with the development before me. In the absence of any further detail on that proposal, I am unable to be certain that it represents a direct parallel with the appeal scheme, and so I can afford it limited weight.

11. The second[2] dealt with a side to rear wrap-around extension of a depth of around 6m. From the available details, it appears that that proposal lacked visual cohesion, a factor which the inspector took into account in reaching that decision. The available details suggest that that proposal varied in a number of ways from the appeal scheme before me, and there is insufficient information to enable me to give that decision more than limited weight in my consideration. Therefore, whilst I have had regard to both of these decisions, I have considered the present appeal on its own merits.

[1] APP/M5450/D/16/3143943
[2] APP/M5450/D/14/2224361

Conditions

12. As the structure is already in place, the imposition of the suggested commencement and materials conditions and the requirement for the scheme to accord with the submitted plans would serve no planning purpose.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR