

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/W/16/3155964
10A Lansdowne Grove, London NW10 1PR

- 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 Mrs Aisling Horgan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 16/2318, dated 30 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a hip to gable and rear dormer extension and insertion of roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a hip to gable and rear dormer extension and insertion of roof lights at 10A Lansdowne Grove, London NW10 1PR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/2318, dated 30 May 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 10A/0S; 10A/01; 10A/02 and 10A/03.
 - 3) All new external work shall be carried out in materials that match, in colour, texture and design detail those of the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property, and upon the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Lansdowne Grove is a relatively short, straight, street of linked semi-detached properties. The prevailing roof form of buildings within the street is one of hipped roofs, although I noted there to be a small number of properties that were either originally built with gable-ended roofs, or which had been converted from hip-to-gable.
 4. The pairs of dwellings within the street are well proportioned, with a pleasing sense of rhythm evident along both sides of the street frontage. That rhythm, I observed, derives principally from the prominent pairs of two storey bays on
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each building, together with a heavily recessed, flat-roofed two storey linking section between pairs. At roof level, the pitched and hipped roofs atop the double storey bays, the parapet party walls that stand proud of the roof plane and the centrally positioned squat chimney stacks with multiple pots on each pair of buildings add further to the rhythm and articulation found along both sides of the street's length.

5. Whilst there is a degree of symmetry and balance between Nos 8 and 10, the pair of properties are not direct mirror images of each other. Due to a slight incline in the street from southeast to northwest, the appeal property steps up from its adjoining half at No 8. As a consequence, the floor, eaves and ridge levels do not align across the pair.
6. The proposal seeks to extend the upper floor flat into the existing roof space, by way of a hip-to-gable extension, with a dormer extension to the rear. The Council's SPG5: Altering and Extending Your Home (September 2002, SPG), provides guidance on various elements of domestic extensions and alterations, including specifically in relation to hipped and gabled roofs. It recognises that, although such proposals will not normally be permitted as they can result in significant change to the character and appearance of the house and streetscene, they can, in certain circumstances, be acceptable.
7. Having regard to the SPG, the appeal property is not located on a corner plot, nor is it within a conservation area or an area of distinctive residential character. I have not been advised that the property has been extended at the side with a two storey side extension but, from my observations, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the recessed, linking two storey elements are integral features to the layout of the street as a whole, rather than later extensions.
8. By virtue of this heavily recessed linking element, the proposed extension would not link the adjacent properties at Nos 10 and 12 at roof level. The glimpses of sky above and beyond the existing roofline would be retained between the properties, whilst in longer views along the street, the two storey bays and protruding dividing walls at roof level would retain their pre-eminence within the streetscene. The regimented layout of the properties and the limited space between them are such that the visual effect of the hip-to-gable extension would not be significant, either in the context of the host property, or the wider streetscene. Although it would fill in the void in the roofscape created by the existing hipped roof, I do not find that this would be harmful to character or appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area.
9. The roof light windows would be well-proportioned and well-spaced within the resulting front roof plane. I am satisfied that they would not appear excessive within the roof plane or when viewed from the front, from which aspect I find the existing two storey bays to be the dominant feature. At the rear, I note that the Council are satisfied that the proposed dormer window would fit within the guidelines set out in the SPG. I agree, and I find that it would sit comfortably within the resulting rear roof plane, and would not dominate the rear of the property, either individually or cumulatively.
10. I noted the presence of other properties in Lansdowne Grove that had gable-ended roofs. Whilst I am not aware of the circumstances surrounding those examples, and I accept that they are some distance from the appeal property, they do highlight the subtle differences and range of detailed design variations

that are evident within the street. Gabled-end roofs are not uncommon within Lansdowne Grove and the surrounding area, and the proposals before me would add to the variety and variation within the street whilst retaining and maintaining the features that I found to contribute most to the character and appearance of the host property, and the wider streetscene.

11. I am satisfied therefore that the proposal would not constitute a substantial or overpowering addition to the roof of the appeal property. Whilst it would represent a technical breach of the 2 metre side separation distance required by the SPG, I am satisfied that the proposal as a whole would broadly accord with the overall design aims of the SPG, and with policies BE2, BE7 and BE9 of the London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan and policy CP17 of the London Borough of Brent Core Strategy. Together, these policies seek to ensure a high quality of design that has regard to local context and character and, as such, broadly align with one of the core planning principles set out in the National Planning policy Framework (the Framework) of seeking to ensure high quality design.

Other Matters

12. Lansdowne Grove is a typical suburban street with a relatively dense built-form that inevitably results in a degree of inter-visibility between neighbouring and opposing dwellings. As such, the existing first floor windows at the rear of the appeal property overlook adjoining rear gardens. In this context, I do not consider that the additional window within the proposed dormer extension would result in significant harm to neighbouring properties.
13. A neighbour has also raised concerns about an increase in tenants, and therefore noise, at the appeal property. However, I have no evidence before me that would lead me to conclude that the creation of two additional bedrooms in the roof space would result in the creation of more noise and I therefore attach only limited weight to this matter.
14. The matter of construction access to the rear of the property, via the adjacent property at 4A Dog Lane, is a private matter between the respective property owners. I have not therefore given this matter any further consideration.

Conditions

15. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council in the light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. I agree that, in addition to the time limit and plans conditions, which are necessary in order to provide certainty, a condition requiring external materials to match existing materials is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the host property, and the surrounding area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR