
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by John L Gray DipArch MSc Registered Architect

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

Decision date: 5 December 2016

Appeal Ref. APP/F5540/D/16/3160875
8 Chiswick Lane, London, W4 2JE

- 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 Anne Swift against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application, ref. 00249/8/P2, dated 20 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing rear extension and the construction of a new single-storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed. Planning permission is granted for the demolition of the existing rear extension and the construction of a new single-storey rear extension at 8 Chiswick Lane, London, W4 2JE, in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. 00249/8/P2, dated 20 June 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) the development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: F16/P/01-F16/P/04 inclusive;
 - 3) no development shall take place until details and/or samples of all external facing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details;
 - 4) demolition and construction works shall take place only between 08:00 and 18:00 hours on weekdays, 09:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or on Bank or Public Holidays;
 - 5) the roof area of the extension hereby permitted shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues in the appeal. The first is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the house and surrounding area. The second is the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of no.6, the other half of this semi-detached pair of houses.
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Reasons

First main issue – character and appearance

3. The existing extension at the rear of no. 8 is substantial. Its size and scale are, however, to an extent disguised by its design, which uses the same brickwork and window style as the main house and the device of what appear to be two small pavilions to break up its overall massing. Its substantial depth, though, is still readily apparent. The proposed extension would be unashamedly modern in appearance, with large unbroken areas of glazing where it would sit across the rear of the original house. The maximum depth of the existing extension is around 6.0m from the rear wall of the main house. The depth of the proposed extension would be about 0.2m greater for the more southerly half, around 2.0m greater for the more northerly half. The existing and attached store, probably originally a separate building, would become the kitchen – but with changes only to the pattern of openings, not to its form.
4. The additional area of the proposed extension compared with the existing is not unduly significant in terms of the visual relationship with the existing house. This main issue, therefore, is essentially a matter of appearance. The obvious depth of the existing extension largely negates any first impression of perhaps being a relatively modest and established addition to the original house; it is clearly very substantial. The proposal, on the other hand, would express itself as a modern addition to the original house. Its depth would be apparent but its extensive glazing would give it a lightness lacking in the existing extension, distinguishing it from the main house; also, the former store would appear more as a separate structure visually tied to the main house by the extension.
5. There is nothing inherently wrong with the design philosophy for either the existing or the proposed extension. The former seeks to reflect some of the characteristics of the original house; the latter clearly says that it is a modern addition. Given that there is so little difference in floor area and volume between the two, there is no reasonable basis for refusing what is now proposed. In the circumstances, the appeal proposal does not conflict with adopted Local Plan Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 or what is sought in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Residential Extension Guidelines.
6. The officer's report refers to the size of surrounding extensions and the proposed extension appearing out of character with the general rhythm of additions along the street. It is difficult to give weight to that argument. There is a substantial amount of vegetation around no. 8's garden, and adjacent gardens, so that it is very difficult to see what the situation is. (Trees and shrubs can always be removed but the likelihood of that happening here must be very small.) In addition, no. 10 has a canopy beyond its rear extension, just visible above the boundary fence, in a design that appears very modern and thus complementary to the design of the appeal scheme.

Second main issue – residential amenity

7. It is almost impossible to see the rear of no. 6 from no. 8's garden, so dense is the planting along the common boundary. The proposed extension would be around 2.0m longer than the existing one. However, the practical effect of that would be to replace dense vegetation with a relatively short additional length of wall – there would, as things stand, be no loss of light and, while the outlook on to a brick wall might be harsher than on to planting, that could be alleviated, if thought beneficial, by planting against the new wall. It is true that planting can always be removed, whereas a building is permanent; as

suggested above, however, the likelihood of removal along the common boundary must be very small, save to enable construction of the proposed extension.

8. The proposed extension would also be slightly higher than the existing, by around 0.5m – but that would be on a line at right angles to the house rather than along the boundary itself. The additional height would be most apparent over the increased length of the extension, rather than towards the rear of the original house but, overall, the net effect would not be unduly noticeable.
9. Accordingly, there would be no undue conflict with Policy SC7 or with what is sought in the SPD on Residential Extension Guidelines.

Conclusion

10. There is no conflict with the policies of the adopted Local Plan that could lead to dismissal of this appeal. Normally, on this type of appeal, planning permission would be granted subject to conditions on the statutory time limit, the approved plans and materials to match those of the existing building. The nature of the proposed extension is such as to warrant more information on materials than is shown on the application plans. Also, the Council has suggested additional conditions to control working hours, to prevent new openings in the northerly flank wall of the extension and to prevent the use of the flat roof as a balcony. The first of these does not seem unreasonable; the second seems unnecessary as the wall is on the boundary with no. 6 and any window, even if permissible under the Building Regulations, would very likely undermine the privacy of the occupiers of no. 8 as well as no. 6; the third seems entirely reasonable to protect the amenity of the neighbouring residents on either side.

John L Gray

Inspector