
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by Philip Lewis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 06 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/16/3155733

135 Spring Grove Crescent, Hounslow TW3 4DA

- 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 Ajmal Quereshi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01047/135/P2, dated 12 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2016.
 - The development proposed was originally described as 'the proposal is to convert the existing house into 3 bedroom and one bedroom maisonette at spread at two levels'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a front porch and conversion of a garage into habitable room to convert the existing house into two self-contained dwellings at 135 Spring Grove Crescent, Hounslow TW3 4DA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 01047/135/P2, dated 12 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: OS Map and block plan P-135 SG-01; existing plans and elevations P-135 SG-02; proposed plans and elevations P-135 SG-03 and P-135 SG-04 Rev A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The use hereby permitted shall not be begun until details of the arrangements for storing of waste and recycled materials have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The arrangements for storing waste and recycled materials shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with any approval given and shall be completed before any part of the accommodation hereby permitted is occupied.

Procedural matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development as set out in the heading above, I have taken the description of development from the appeal form for the decision as it more accurately describes the development proposed. At my site visit I observed that a dormer has been constructed in the rear roof of the
-

appeal property. This is not shown on the submitted plans and for the avoidance of doubt, I have based my decision on the plans as submitted.

Main Issues

3. The main issues for the appeal are:

- The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupiers of 133 Spring Grove Crescent with particular reference to noise and disturbance; and
- The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. The appeal proposal relates to a semi-detached dwelling which is situated at one end of Spring Grove Crescent. The appeal property adjoins 133 Spring Grove Crescent to one side and rear gardens of dwellings on Spring Grove Road to the other.
5. Policy SC6 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan (Local Plan) is concerned with managing building conversions and the sub-division of existing housing to contribute to housing supply without having an adverse impact on the character of the area or the amenity of residents. Policy SC6 includes that for a dwelling to be considered suitable for sub-division, a minimum net original internal floor area of that dwelling is expected to be 130 square metres. Paragraph 5.20 of the Local Plan explains that the 130 square metre requirement reflects the minimum standards of internal space required for new development and that conversion of residential properties that have been previously extended to create a total of at least 130 square metres will not be supported due to effects upon residential amenity and the character of the surrounding residential area. In this case, the parties agree that the original dwelling had a floor area of about 104 square metres which is significantly below the figure set out in Policy SC6. The dwelling has however been extended and the total floorspace is stated to be about 177 square metres.
6. It is proposed that a porch is added to the front of the appeal property to form a common lobby into a one bedroom flat which would be arranged over both floors to one side of the building and a three bedroom dwelling to the other side adjoining No 133. The rear garden would be divided along its length to serve the two properties.
7. The proposed vertical separation of the appeal property would ensure that No 133 continued to have one adjoining neighbour, rather than two, arranged over two floors. I have considered that additional off-street parking would be provided at the front of the appeal property, but do not consider that this would have a significant effect on the living conditions of neighbours, given its limited scale and position to the front of the property. I note that the street is characterised by its single family houses, which are built relatively close together, but I am not convinced on the balance of evidence that the appeal proposal would give rise to an unacceptable increase in noise and general disturbance in the area as a result of increased activity and comings and goings from the sub-division of the property or intensification in use of the property.

8. To conclude on this matter, I do not consider that the appeal proposal would give rise to significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 133 in respect of noise and disturbance. Additionally, the proposal does not conflict with Local Plan Policy CC2 which sets down criteria for development in respect of urban design and architecture. The appeal proposal does not conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in this regard, which in paragraph 17 includes that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Character and appearance

9. I have considered the Council's concern that the proposal would have an adverse effect upon the character of the area, which it has been stated is that of family housing. However, I am not convinced that the sub-division of the property would be evident from the street, given the use of a single common entrance porch. Additionally, the proposed frontage parking is not uncharacteristic of that in the area. Furthermore, the proposed sub-division of the dwelling would maintain the provision of family accommodation at the site and would not give rise to accommodation of a layout which would appear discordant with that of the surrounding area.
10. The appeal proposal therefore would maintain the general character of the surrounding area, in accordance with criterion (d) of Local Plan Policy SC6. It also does not conflict with Local Plan Policy CC1 which is concerned with development conserving the character of the area.

Conditions

11. I have reviewed the conditions suggested by the Council against the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. I have revised some of those suggested in the interests of clarity and to accord with national policy and guidance. I have attached conditions regarding timescale and specifying the plans as that provides certainty. I have also attached conditions in respect of external construction materials and waste and recycling storage in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusions

12. The appeal proposal conflicts with criterion (f) of Local Plan Policy SC6 in that the original dwelling did not have a minimum floor area of 130 square metres. However, the proposal would give rise to one family sized unit and would not cause to harm to the living conditions of neighbours or to the character and appearance of the area. Additionally, there is no dispute that the proposed dwellings would meet the relevant space standards and provide good living conditions for future occupants in terms of privacy, daylight and outlook. Therefore, whilst I note that the Local Plan was adopted in 2015, on the balance of the evidence, I do not find the proposal to be unacceptable.
13. For the reasons given above and having considered all matters raised, I consider that the appeal should be allowed.

Philip Lewis

INSPECTOR