

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 December 2016

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/D/16/3156293

182 Tufnell Park Road, Islington, London N7 0EE

- 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 Ms Dieu Quynh Nguyen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/0015/FUL, dated 22 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing rear lean-to extension, erection of a full width rear "wrap around" extension at ground floor level. Half width extension to the rear outrigger at first floor level. Installation of metal balustrade on the second floor flat roof area. Rear dormer and hip to gable extension at roof level, removal of an existing chimney on side roof slope. Excavation of basement level and extension below the existing footprint of the building and to the rear garden to create new habitable space with creation of a front and rear lightwell.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development provided on the application form has been replaced by a fuller, more detailed version in subsequent documents. I consider this to be usefully more comprehensive and have thus employed it here.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one half of a three storey semi-detached property located approximately midway along Tufnell Park Road, between its junctions with Huddleston Road and Campdale Road. Although the appeal property and its adjoining half broadly follow the defining rhythm and uniformity of double storey bays and fenestration details along the street, they do so with slightly larger overall proportions. Most noticeably, beyond being a pair of semi-detached properties within otherwise unbroken terraces, the pair stand alone with hipped, rather than gable, roofs.
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5. At the rear, the appeal property and the adjoining property replicate the balance and rhythm found at the front, sharing a degree of symmetry with paired two storey flat-roofed outriggers either side of a large and distinctive sloping chimney stack at the rear. Indeed, when viewed from the rear, across the adjoining Tufnell Park Sports Ground and from Campdale Road, Nos 182 and 184 are immediately identifiable, the pair clearly differentiated from the terraces on either side by their differing proportions, hipped roofs and higher eaves and ridge levels that stand above the adjacent terraces.
6. In longer views towards the appeal property along Tufnell Park Road, the visual implications of the proposed hip-to-gable extension would largely be lost amongst the roofscape of the adjacent terraces. The end-of-terrace properties adjacent to Nos 182 (No 180) and 184 (no 186) both feature gable ends with raised parapet walls along the roof-level party walls which, together with the minimal gap between Nos 182 and 180, would largely negate the visual effect of the hip-to-gable extension in these longer views along the street.
7. However, from directly opposite and in closer quarters to the front, the effect of this element of the proposal would be more clear cut and, in my judgement, visually harmful. The proposal would introduce considerable additional bulk into the roof and would unbalance the pair of properties at Nos 182 and 184. Furthermore, whereas the existing hipped roof manages the step in levels between the appeal property and the adjacent terraces in a discrete manner, the proposed gable would introduce a harsher step between the two roof elements of this particular part of Tufnell Park Road. Although limited to glimpsed views between Nos 182 and 180, the dormer cheek would nevertheless be visible above and behind the resulting roofline, adding further to the bulk and massing of the proposed roofline.
8. This bulk and massing would however be more evident, and harmful, in longer views towards the rear of the appeal property from across the adjacent sports fields and streets beyond. From this aspect, Nos 182 and 184 are a distinctive element of the Tufnell Park Road roofscape and the proposal would erode the symmetry of the pair, as noted above. Whilst the proposed dormer window would be inset from the altered gable side elevation, it would not be set down from the ridgeline, nor would it be set above the line of the eaves, the latter two both being features that the Council's Urban Design Guidelines (UDG) seeks to promote in dormer window extensions¹.
9. The unusual fenestration of the stairwell window would cut through the eaves line of the main building in an awkward manner, linking the proposed dormer to the main rear face of the property in a manner that the Council's Urban Design Guide (UDG) seeks to avoid. Its scale, massing and detailed fenestration would unacceptably draw the eye towards it, even from distance across the sports ground whilst the scale and position of the dormer window within the roof, and its proximity to the rear chimney stack, would erode the distinctive appearance and form of the chimney. The host property would become top-heavy, the semi-detached pair one-sided and unbalanced, and as a consequence, I find that the proposal would fail to contribute positively to the character, appearance and distinctiveness of the host building and to the surrounding area.

¹ UDG, paragraph 2.4.3 Rooflines with Existing Alterations / Extensions – Types of Roof Level Fenestration – page 54

10. The rear of Nos 182 and 184 currently follows the general pattern established elsewhere along this particular stretch of Tufnell Park Road, in displaying a sense of rhythm and uniformity in the existing paired outriggers. Two storeys in height, with flat roofs, the outriggers form balanced and well-proportioned rear elements of a simple and straightforward appearance that relate well to the main buildings in terms of the scale, proportions and width. However, the proposed rear extensions at ground and first floor levels in this instance, would not.
11. Instead, I find that these elements of the proposal would introduce a confusing mix of styles and forms to an otherwise simple rear elevation that is typical of many of the nearby properties. The varied and conflicting roof forms of the ground floor elements in particular would add to the awkward design and proportions of the dormer window and roof extension. Together, these elements would be at odds with the simplicity and symmetry evident at the rear of the appeal property, and shared with No 184. The two storey element of the rear extension would add to the cumulative impact that the proposals would have upon the form, character and appearance of the rear of the property, further adding to the harmful impact upon the rear of the property that I have identified above.
12. Thus, the proposed hip-to-gable extension, rear dormer window and the single and two storey rear extensions would fail to respect the distinctive character and appearance of the existing property, its form and its presence within the Tufnell Park Road streetscene. As such, I conclude that the proposal would be contrary to Policy DM2.1 of Islington's Development Management Policies (DMP), as supported by the provisions of the UDG. Together, these seek to ensure that all forms of development are of high quality, make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and that developments respect and respond positively to existing buildings and reinforce and complement local distinctiveness.
13. Although Policy CS8 of Islington's Core Strategy is quoted in the reason for refusal, its aims seem to me to be more strategically focused and less directly applicable to a proposal of the scale and nature before me. I have therefore attached limited weight to its provisions in my considerations.
14. I accept that there are examples of other large dormer windows on the rears of nearby properties, including at No 180. I acknowledge too that the UDG does not preclude larger dormers, stating that they may sometimes be acceptable where a precedent has already been set elsewhere in the terrace. I do not, however, find these other examples to be a defining characteristic of the rear elevations of this particular part of Tufnell Park Road. Moreover, those that are evident are on the rear of terraced properties and do not provide a direct comparison to the host property. For this reason, the presence of other dormer windows to the rear of properties on Tufnell Park Road does not alter my conclusions, above.
15. The Council adopted a Basement Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in January 2016, which sets out certain principles in relation to basement developments. I note that the Council's only concern regarding the scale and extent of the proposed basement extension appears to relate to its depth, and particularly the floor to ceiling heights, shown on the submitted drawings. I am satisfied that whilst the proposal seeks to increase the depth of

the existing basement and to extend it, it would consist of only one storey. However, although the parties disagree over the depths indicated on the submitted plans, I am nevertheless satisfied that the submitted plans show finished floor levels to finished ceiling heights within the basement of less than 3 metres². I am therefore unable to identify any conflict with the provisions of the SPD³ in this respect.

16. I have been invited by the appellant to consider the possibility of reaching a split decision in respect of the appeal proposals, thereby allowing a part, or parts, of the scheme that may be considered to be acceptable, and dismissing the rest. However, whilst that power may exist⁴ and, as I have set out above, I find there to be no conflict with the SPD, I do not consider that the basement element of the proposal is clearly severable, physically or functionally, from the other elements of the proposal, to entertain such an approach. Nor do I find the lack of harm arising from the construction of the basement and the absence of conflict with the SPD to be sufficient to outweigh the harm to character and appearance that I have identified above.

Other Matters

17. I note that the Council's officer report considered the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of future occupiers of the extended property, particularly with regard to outlook from proposed bedroom 6 at basement level. However, as this concern did not translate into a reason for refusal, and as I have found above that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and to the surrounding area, I have not considered this matter further.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR

² Anderson Consulting Engineers drawings: 01; GA02; S01 and S02

³ Design Indicators DI.2 and DI.3

⁴ Section 79(1)(b) – Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)