

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 December 2016

by M Brookes BA MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/16/3163016

13 Southville Road, Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 8AX

- 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 Nikolaos Chatoutsidis against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application, Ref. 01040/13/P1, dated 17 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a ground floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposed extension on:
 - living conditions at 15 Southville Road in terms of outlook and enclosure
 - the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Living conditions at 15 Southville Road

3. The appeal property comprises a two storey, semi-detached house on a corner plot. It faces North West, but the other half of the semi-detached pair of houses at 15 Southville Road faces South West. Consequently the rear of the appeal property backs onto the side of the attached property and adjoins the side boundary of part of its rear garden.
 4. The appeal proposal comprises a single storey extension to the whole of one of its side elevations. It would have a shallow pitched roof sloping down from the existing house towards the boundary of the property with 11 Southville Road.
 5. The rear wall of the extension would abut and extend beyond the line of the rear boundary of the appeal property with 15 Southville Road. The whole of the north-western side boundary of the rear garden of that adjacent property would then be defined by the two storey wall of the existing appeal property and by the highest section of the rear wall of the proposed extension. That rear wall would also continue well beyond the line of the rear garden boundary of 15 Southville Road.
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6. Having regard also to the limited depth of the rear garden of 15 Southville Road, I consider that the extended building would unacceptably harm the outlook from the closest ground floor rear window and from the garden area to the rear of the house. It would also appear oppressive and create an unacceptable degree of enclosure. The projection of the extended property beyond the rear wall of 15 Southville Road would be much greater than the maximum guideline figure that is included in the Council's Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance (2003) (SPG) to safeguard the amenity of neighbours.
7. I accept that the garden of that property extends to the side, where it would be less affected by the proposed development. I also acknowledge that an extension constructed under 'permitted development' rights could cause some harm to living conditions in that property in terms of outlook and enclosure and that the proposed extension would replace a high boundary fence. However, these considerations do not materially mitigate or justify the harm that the appeal proposal would cause.
8. In summary, the extension would have an unacceptably harmful effect on living conditions at 15 Southville Road in terms of outlook and enclosure. It would therefore conflict with Policy CC2 of the Council's Local Plan 2015-2030 (LP) which promotes high quality urban design by measures including providing adequate outlook and minimising overbearingness. It would also conflict with Policy SC7 which supports residential extensions that do not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents, including avoiding an unacceptable loss of outlook or creating an unacceptable sense of enclosure.
9. The extension would also conflict with one of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework that planning should always seek to secure good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area

10. Development in the section of Southville Road in which the appeal property lies comprises a mixture of semi-detached houses and bungalows of a variety of designs and on somewhat varied alignments. The appeal property is a semi-detached house but, from the front appears to be a wide-fronted detached property with an asymmetrical front elevation. The front wall of the house extends as a high freestanding wall to the boundary with 11 Southville Road and serves to separate the front and side/rear gardens.
11. The front wall of the proposed extension would follow the same alignment as the existing freestanding wall. It would also extend to the side boundary of the property as a freestanding wall over a new door to the side/rear garden. Unlike the existing wall, the new extension/boundary wall would slope gently down from the existing building.
12. Because there is no obvious distinction between the form of the front wall of the extension and the freestanding wall, the extension would in some views appear wider than it would be. The Council has also expressed concern, in accordance with the SPG, about the introduction of what would appear to be a second door in the front elevation of the building. These issues could be readily addressed by minor changes to the design of the freestanding section of wall and of the door

so that it more clearly looks like a garden gate. Such minor changes would improve the appearance of the development.

13. However, even without such changes I consider that the proposed development would not look materially different to the existing boundary wall. Even with the freestanding wall, the extension would be significantly less wide than the existing house and would be clearly subordinate to the scale of the existing house in accordance with SPG guidance. The lean-to roof form is not an uncharacteristic form of extension and in this case serves to minimise its visual impact.
14. The extension would not be set back from the front wall of the house in accordance with advice in the SPG, but this guidance is largely to avoid a terracing effect which would not result in this case. Furthermore, the wall would be set back from the front of the projecting gable at the appeal property and the SPG allows for no set-back where, as in this case, the front wall of the adjacent property projects well in front of the extension. The extension would be recessive in the street scene and not out of character in an area of varied forms of development.
15. Overall, I conclude that the extension would not be unacceptably harmful to the character or appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area. It would not conflict with LP Policies CC1, CC2 or SC7 which seek to secure development generally that is of high quality design that sensitively respects an area's character and residential extensions that maintain the character of the area.

Other Matters

16. I have considered the effect of the extension on the outlook from and daylight entering rooms in the side of 11 Southville Road. However, having regard to the distance of the extension from windows in that property and the height of its end wall being not much greater than the intervening boundary fence, I share the Council's view that the development would not unacceptably harm living conditions in that adjacent property.
17. The extension would have the benefit of providing useful additional accommodation, but that does not outweigh the harm it would cause and the conflict with the development plan when read as a whole.

Conclusion

18. The extension would not be unacceptably harmful to the character or appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area but would have an unacceptably harmful effect on living conditions at 15 Southville Road in terms of outlook and enclosure. For that reason and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

M Brookes

INSPECTOR