

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 23 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/16/3159418
102 Apple Tree Avenue, Uxbridge UB8 3PU

- 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 Hamid Saeed against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 18099/APP/2016/1546, dated 29 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey, 1-bed, semi-detached dwelling with associated parking and amenity space involving installation of vehicular crossover to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The description of the proposal varies between the application form and the subsequent documents. I have used the description on the appeal form as it describes the proposal more succinctly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in a predominantly residential area which is characterised by early 20th century housing. The dwellings are arranged in two distinct forms, either in semi-detached pairs or in terraces of four. The property at 102 Apple Tree Avenue forms one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. The development would result in the subdivision of the plot at No 102, and the construction of a new two storey dwelling which would adjoin the existing property.
 5. The Council's document entitled 'Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Extensions (SPD, December 2008) sets out guidelines for extensions to residential properties. It states that two storey side extensions will be considered in terms of their setting and with particular reference to the character and quality of the overall street scene.
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6. Nos 102, 104, 106 and 108 Apple Tree Avenue occupy a prominent position on the corner of the junction between Apple Tree Avenue and Violet Avenue. Of these, No 108 has been altered with a large side extension. Despite minor alterations, the other three largely retain their original form and character.
7. I accept that the design and proposed materials of the new house would be in keeping with the appearance of No 102. The development would also broadly reflect the appearance of the side extension at No 108, which was granted planning permission in 2007¹. However, it would add a substantial third element to the existing pair of dwellings, thereby departing significantly from their distinctive original symmetrical design. The SPD requires that two storey side extensions should not exceed two thirds of the width of the original dwelling. At around 5.4m in width, the development would exceed two thirds of the width of the existing building, which is approximately 6m wide, and would thus fail to comply with the SPD guidance.
8. The SPD also advises that, where a return building line exists, any extension should ensure that the openness of the area is maintained and the return building line is not exceeded. In this case, a consistent building line runs across the front elevations of Nos 108 to 102, and continues to the south of the appeal site along the frontages of 100 to 94 Apple Tree Avenue. The proposed extension would break forward of this line, and its visual impact would be made more intrusive by its dominant corner location.
9. The appellant contends that the front elevation lines within the area are not consistent. I observed that the terraces of four dwellings tend to be set back further from the road than the semi-detached pairs. This is the case, for example, with the Violet Avenue properties which are adjacent to No 108. Whilst there are some inconsistencies, I conclude that there remain cohesive building lines within the area. In disrupting the building line of the properties in its immediate vicinity, the proposed scheme would fail to respect the prevailing pattern of development in the area.
10. The gaps between the groups of dwellings are an important element of the layout of the area. In particular, the corner plots tend to be more generous, adding to the spacious, suburban quality of the surroundings. I accept that a separation distance of around 1m would remain between the new extension and the site boundary. Nonetheless, by largely infilling the plot, the development would appear cramped within the site, and would substantially reduce the existing openness. Whilst the roof line of the development would be set down by a small distance, and the front elevation set in, these factors would be insufficient to achieve meaningful subordination to No 102, given the overall scale of the extension in proportion to the existing dwelling.
11. The appellant argues that, by mirroring the extension at No 108, the proposal would 'complete' the terrace, and would thus improve the character and appearance of the area. However, three of the four corner dwellings remain unextended. In my judgement, the development would erode the characteristic symmetrical form of Nos 102 and 104, which is a key element of the local built form. I further observed that the junction was designed with a similar pair of semi-detached dwellings on the opposite side which mirror Nos 102-108. These buildings retain their original form. Whilst the development would in one sense 'balance' Nos 102-108, it would also substantially

¹ 11111/APP/2007/3401

unbalance the deliberate spatial and visual relationship between these four sets of properties which face the junction.

12. I accept that the proposed extension would be smaller than that at No 108 in terms of depth, but this has not led me to a different conclusion on its overall impact. I have been referred to the planning permissions granted for other extensions at 130 Royal Lane, which sits on the corner of the Royal Lane/Bryony Close junction, and at 31 Violet Avenue, which is located to the north of the appeal site. I am unaware of the planning history of these developments, but they serve to demonstrate that such extensions are in the minority within the area. These examples would therefore not justify the harm that I have identified.
13. Drawing these factors together, I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012), insofar as it requires new development to enhance the local distinctiveness of the area. It would further conflict with Policies BE13 and BE15 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1998) Saved Policies 27th September 2007, which respectively resist any development which would fail to harmonise with the existing street scene, or with the architectural composition and proportions of the original building. Finally, it would fail to accord with the guidelines set out in the SPD.
14. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR