
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2017

by P W Clark MA MRTPI MCMI

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

Decision date: 12 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/16/3164113

2 Wessex Gardens, Golders Green, London NW11 9RT

- 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 Simon Drachman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 16/5932/HSE, dated 12 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is a small first floor front extension and enlarged porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a small first floor front extension and enlarged porch at 2 Wessex Gardens, Golders Green, London NW11 9RT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/5932/HSE, dated 12 September 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: 003 A and 004 A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Reasons

2. Although there are two reasons for refusal, the issue is essentially the same in both cases, that is; the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
 3. Most of the properties in Wessex Gardens and the part of The Ridgeway immediately adjoining are semi-detached. Number 2 is one half of a pair of matching symmetrical semi-detached properties. On the day of my visit they were largely unaltered from their original construction. It, and its partner, may well reflect what was originally a characteristic of Wessex Gardens. But that is no longer the dominant characteristic of the street.
 4. A few properties (such as 121/123 The Ridgeway, a few doors away) appear to have been designed asymmetrically from the start. Many others, including numbers 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 41, 43 and 45 have now been altered by hip to gable conversions, loft
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extensions, side extensions or other alterations so that they no longer form symmetrical pairs. Number 2 itself has the benefit of a Certificate of Lawfulness for a hip to gable conversion and rear dormer, not yet constructed, but which would unbalance the present symmetry of the pair, so I am not convinced that the present proposal which would confirm and reinforce that loss of symmetry is either harmful in its own right or uncharacteristic of the street.

5. A characteristic of the street which remains, despite the loss of symmetry in pairs of houses and the removal of many hipped roof forms, is dominant, steeply pitched roofs. In some cases these sweep down to ground level, either to the side of the house, as in the present case, or to entrance porches centred between projecting side wings. The present proposal would lose the sideways extension of the front gable slope down to ground level, replaced by a small hipped pitch to a flat roof on a small first floor extension. But, in fair substitution, there would be a substantial hipped roof over an enlarged single storey porch. The proposal would not retain the original design of the property unaltered but it is neither a listed building nor in a Conservation Area, so that should not be the expectation. It would however provide a dominant roof at a low level, entirely in keeping with the character of the street.
6. It would therefore comply with policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) of September 2012, which call for a high standard of urban design reflecting local context and with policy DM01(b) of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) adopted in September 2012, which calls for all development to be based on an understanding of local characteristics. With the condition suggested by the Council, it would also comply with London Plan policy 7.6B(c) which requires development to comprise details and materials that complement local character. I therefore allow the appeal.

P. W. Clark

Inspector