
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2017

by Keith Manning BSc (Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/16/3165276

215 Long Lane, Hillingdon, Uxbridge UB10 9JW

- 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 Sundeep Saxena against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 4204/APP/2016/3281, dated 31 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey side and rear extension, single storey rear extension, garage into habitable space, roof area to habitable space with dormers, rooflights and balcony.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:-

- The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and that of the area, with particular reference to the street scene; and
- The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of occupiers of 215a Long Lane with particular reference to outlook and light.

Reasons

3. The street scene of this section of Long Lane is relatively robust in the sense that detached and semi-detached houses of varying design in spacious plots, albeit generally conforming to a discernible if imprecise building line, are its essential characteristic overall. However, small groupings of essentially very similar dwellings, for example the semi-detached houses opposite and a little to the south of the appeal site, are a distinctive characteristic within that overall theme. The appeal site, No 215 is clearly one of such a grouping, apparently built alongside its near neighbour 215a to an identical design. Together with the detached house 215b immediately to the north of the latter, of very similar design to the front, the three houses are a distinct and cohesive group, similarly spaced.
4. The individuality of some of the larger houses on Long Lane is therefore not a defining characteristic of the appeal site. In the context of Long Lane overall,

the houses read as a distinct group. A common defining characteristic, amongst others, within the group is the hipped nature of the roof line, which reduces apparent bulk and makes for visual separation of each dwelling, complementary to the intervening space between the side walls.

5. The proposed scheme of extension in this case introduces substantial side dormers which would have the effect of making the house look not only boxlike in outline but also top-heavy, a characteristic that would be discordantly exacerbated by the contrast with the distinctively triangular rooflines of the matching neighbours, which serve to create a well-proportioned and balanced assemblage of architectural elements.
6. The incongruity of this approach would be further exacerbated by the reduction in the gap between the appeal site and 215a, by virtue of the wholesale sideways expansion of the house on its northern flank. Although the reduction would not create a true "terracing" effect, the facts that the three houses read as a group and that 215 and 215a in particular appear as a virtually identical pair would draw attention to the failure of the scheme of extension, as perceived from the street, to appear subordinate to the original dwelling.
7. In combination with the proposed side dormer extensions, the asymmetric gap reduction would impart a cramped impression to the layout of the houses; and the substantial setback from the road would make this all the more apparent in the context of the group because it is this setback which enables the house to be viewed from the street in that way particularly effectively.
8. The Council cites a suite of policies in its local plan relevant to the proposal, namely BE1, BE13, BE15, BE19 and BE22 which, taken together, require good and sensitive design in context, an object which is consistent with the design aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and which is given further articulation in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS:Residential Extensions, a form of guidance which carries weight as a material consideration, albeit not the full weight merited by the development plan itself.
9. For the reasons I have given, the character and appearance of the dwelling would, in its essential context, become incongruous in appearance as perceived from the public domain of the street. The proposed development would therefore not only harm the character and appearance of the dwelling itself but also its contribution to the street scene. That outcome would conflict harmfully with the intentions of the development plan as expressed through the suite of policies referred to.
10. The increased height and bulk of the dwelling would impinge significantly on the outlook from the kitchen window on the south side of 215a, which is already relatively close to 215. Due to orientation it is likely that there would be increased shading in sunlit conditions and certainly the side wall of 215 in closer proximity for its full height would be a domineering presence in the outlook from that habitable room, reducing also the diffuse daylight available. Contrary to the intentions of the local plan policies BE19, BE20 and BE21, which variously address amenity, and also the NPPF and the Council's supplementary guidance previously mentioned, this would materially harm the living conditions of occupiers of 215a.

11. I am of course conscious that 215a is in the same ownership as the appeal site but that might not always be the case and in any event it falls to be considered for planning purposes as a separate dwelling in its own right. Whilst the present unity of ownership is not immaterial, it is not therefore a persuasive consideration sufficient to overcome the harmful conflict with the intentions of relevant policy.
12. On both main issues I have identified harmful conflict with the development plan and other relevant policy. Whilst I have taken all other matters raised into account, I do not consider any material considerations, singly or in combination, have been identified sufficient to outweigh that conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Keith Manning

Inspector