

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

by Richard S Jones BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/16/3165363
40 Spring Grove, Mitcham CR4 2NP

- 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 A Yar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 16/P3124, dated 31 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a ground and first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The proposed development is described in the application form as a first floor side extension. However, it was evident from my site visit that the existing ground floor element is a conservatory and the plans show a solid brick construction at ground floor level rather than the retention of the conservatory. I have therefore used the Council's description of development as a ground and first floor extension, as this more accurately describes the appeal proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of a group of four attached, two storey dwellings. The arrangement is such that the south eastern side of the host property adjoins No 38 Spring Grove, whilst the rear partly adjoins the side of No 36 Spring Grove. Consequently, the main front elevation of the appeal dwelling is positioned at right angles to those to which it is attached. There is no back garden to the property in the conventional sense and the side elevation has the appearance of a rear elevation. It is in this location that the extension would be erected.
 5. Due to the layout of the estate, the side of the dwelling is exposed and prominent, sitting forward of the building line of the terrace properties to the north. Consequently it, and the rear of the dwellings to which it is attached, are highly visible from the public realm and from the surrounding residential properties.
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6. Whilst the ground floor element would be largely screened by the existing boundary fencing, the first floor level would be highly visible in a wide field of view. From the front, the extension would satisfactorily relate to the host dwelling and being set back from the main elevation and set down from the main ridgeline, it would appear subordinate to it. However, from the north, the extension would obscure one of the existing first floor windows and replace it with a projecting blank elevation and an asymmetrical hipped roof above, which would relate poorly to the existing dwelling and roof form.
7. It is also readily apparent from the public realm that none of the properties in the group or the neighbouring terrace have been extended at first floor level and because of the stagger in the rear building line the development would be projected further towards the public realm. It would therefore become a dominant feature that would relate poorly in design terms to the host dwelling and to that of the adjoining group and neighbouring terrace.
8. I conclude therefore that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area and as such would be contrary to Policies CS.14 of the London Borough of Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy and Policies DM D2 and DM D3 of the Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps. These expect, amongst other matters, extensions to buildings to meet a number of criteria, including, respecting the form, scale, bulk, and proportions of the original building and complementing the character and appearance of the wider setting.
9. Moreover, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Therefore, on the basis of the harm to the character and appearance of the locality, the proposal would fail to meet the sustainability aims of the Framework and as such would not amount to sustainable development.
10. For these reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard S Jones

Inspector