
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2017

by Alexander Walker MPlan MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/16/3163126
6 Cromwell Road, Hounslow TW3 3QD

- 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 Adam Swift against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00323/6/P1, dated 1 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion and extension to create additional bedrooms and bathroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant has included a sectional drawing with the appeal submission indicating a revised scheme to that which was determined by the Council. The revised scheme indicates the pitch of the roof going past the centreline of the existing ridgeline. There are no elevational drawings submitted for this proposed revision. Furthermore, the appellant has indicated that if I am minded to dismiss the appeal proposal he would accept a reduction in the height of the dormer to match the existing ridgeline. I consider that these revised schemes would substantially change the nature of the proposal and I am not satisfied that relevant parties have been made aware of these changes and therefore could be prejudiced by my consideration of them.
3. I also note that the appellant confirms that it is an oversight that the plans show no setback from the eaves. Nevertheless, the application was determined on the basis of the plans submitted.
4. Accordingly, I have determined the appeal based on the proposal that was considered by the Council in their determination of the application as indicated on drawing number (00)2 revision D.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the streetscene and the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring residential properties, with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

6. Cromwell Road is a predominantly residential road. This stretch of the road generally comprises two-storey, terraced dwellings and blocks of four-storey flats. The properties between Staines Road to the north and Grove Road to the south form two terrace rows. The properties in the larger row to the south have varying ridge heights. The three properties in the centre of the row have distinctly lower ridgelines than the properties either side, which are generally uniform with each other, with the exception of one property, No 23 Cromwell Road, which has raised the ridge height as a result of a dormer extension similar to that proposed.
7. The appeal property is a mid-terrace set within the northern terrace row, which comprises eight dwellings. The uniformity of the design of the terraces and their continuous, unbroken ridgeline makes a positive contribution to the streetscene.
8. The London Borough of Hounslow Residential Extension Guidelines (SPG), states that any roof extension should be at least 0.3m below the ridgeline and at least 0.5m above the eaves height. Furthermore, it should be at least 0.5m from the sides of the roof.
9. The proposed dormer extension would rise above the existing ridgeline by approximately 300mm. Consequently, this would disrupt the existing rhythm of the roofscape on the terrace row. This would be exacerbated by the property's mid-terrace position as it would result in an incongruous 'step' in the overall ridgeline and would introduce a discordant note to the streetscene.
10. Furthermore, the dormer would be built on top of the existing wall plate, removing the existing eaves and effectively creating a full three-storey height to the rear. As a result of the width and height of the dormer it would encompass the full extent of the rear of the roof. Consequently, the extension would dominate the rear elevation of the property and fail to appear subordinate to the host dwelling.
11. The proposed terrace would be setback behind the rear building line of the existing two-storey outrigger and would have glazed screening around its perimeter. Given the relatively low height of the screening and its setback position, the terrace would not be readily seen from neighbouring properties. Whilst there are no examples of other terraces in the area, its sympathetic and subordinate design would not unacceptably harm the character or appearance of the host property or the area.
12. I have had regard to the presence of the similar extension in the street, at No 23 Cromwell Road. However, I do not consider that it makes any positive contribution to the streetscene and its replication would only detract further from the character and appearance of the area.
13. I have also had regard to other dormer extensions found nearby on Staines Road whereby the pitch of the roof has been extended beyond the original ridgeline. However, I have no details regarding the Council's consideration of these developments, or whether they even benefit from planning permission. Therefore, I cannot draw any direct comparison with the proposal before me.

14. I find therefore that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the streetscene. As such, it would fail to accord with Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan (LP) 2015-2030, which, amongst other matters, state that poor quality design will be refused; seek to ensure that development responds meaningfully to the site, its characteristics and constraints; and, ensure that development maintains the character of the area. Furthermore, it would fail to comply with the SPG.

Living Conditions

15. The proposed terrace would be accessed via two sets of French doors. The neighbouring property, No 7 Cromwell Road, has a similar outrigger and given the relatively short depth of the rear gardens and the setback position of the terrace from the rear elevation of the outrigger, there would not be any adverse overlooking of the rear gardens of Nos 7 and 8 Cromwell Road.
16. In respect of No 5 Cromwell Road, there is already a moderate degree of overlooking of its small rear garden from the appeal property. The elevated position of the terrace and its close proximity to the boundary with No 5 would significantly increase this degree of overlooking to such an extent that it would unacceptably harm the level of privacy enjoyed by the occupants of No 5. Similarly, the terrace would also allow views into the rear gardens of Nos 3 and 4 Cromwell Road, although to a lesser degree than No 5. Nevertheless, this adds weight to the overall harm.
17. I have had regard to the appellant's suggestion that they would concede the use of the terrace for access if it is found that there would be unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. This would be facilitated by the installation of a Juliet balcony and the terrace would be used for potted plants only. However, access would still be required for watering/tending to the plants and the general maintenance of the terrace. Therefore, I am not satisfied that restricting the balcony to such a use could be adequately controlled by way of a condition.
18. I find therefore that the proposal would significantly harm the living conditions of the occupants of the neighbouring residential properties. As such, it would be contrary to Policies CC2 and SC7 of the LP, which seek to ensure that development does not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents, including the provision of adequate levels of privacy. Furthermore, it would fail to accord with the SPG, which states that the Council will normally refuse terraces because they can lead to overlooking and loss of privacy.

Other Matters

19. The appellant argues that terrace extensions are found in Turnham Green and Chiswick. However, I have not been provided with any examples of such developments and therefore cannot make any direct comparison with the proposal before me.
20. I acknowledge that no objections to the proposal have been received from neighbouring residents. Notwithstanding this, my assessment has been made on the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of both existing and

future occupants. The absence of objections does not equate with there being no harm.

21. Whilst I am sympathetic to the personal circumstances of the appellant and the need for the proposed extension, personal circumstances seldom outweigh the more general planning considerations.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR