

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

by Stephen Hawkins MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/16/3164865
36 Granville Road, Hayes UB3 4PL

- 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 G Bhatti against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 72162/APP/2016/3169, dated 19 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is single/two storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property consists of one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. It occupies a reasonably spaced plot and is located in a suburban street mainly made up of pairs of dwellings with a similar balanced appearance and spacing, giving the area a largely spacious character.
 4. The proposed side extension would be similar in terms of roof form and general design to the dwelling. It would be of limited width, set back around one metre from the main front elevation of the dwelling at first floor level, with a similar eaves but a lower overall height. As a result, the side extension would appear as a subordinate addition to the dwelling and it would not upset the balanced appearance of the pair of dwellings in the street scene.
 5. Consequently, the side extension would be consistent with some of the guidance in the Council's adopted 'Residential Extensions' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) at section 5. Paragraph 5.6 recommends that two storey side extensions should be fully set back from the front elevation by a metre. However, the lack of a set back from the front elevation of the dwelling at ground floor level would have no material effect in terms of the appearance of the side extension as a visually subordinate addition to the dwelling.
 6. Nevertheless, because of its width the side extension would also have the effect that all of the existing space between the dwelling and the side boundary
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would be occupied by two storey built form. This would leave very little of the existing sense of space about the dwelling, making it appear somewhat 'cramped' on its plot in comparison with similar dwellings in the locality. The substantial erosion of the existing space at the side of the dwelling would also significantly restrict the existing largely open field of view between the dwelling and its side boundary. As a result, the side extension would create a more enclosed and urban feel in the street scene. This would be entirely at odds with the more spacious, suburban characteristics of housing in the rest of the street.

7. In particular, the more urban appearance of the appeal property would contrast abruptly with the more open and spacious feel in the vicinity of 38 Granville Road (No 38). I accept that, given the angled siting of No 38 and the significant separation distance involved, it is unlikely that the space up to its boundary with the appeal property would be occupied by more substantial built forms than the existing garage in the future. However, in view of the visual harm identified above, that would not weigh significantly in favour of the proposal. Although reducing the width of the side extension by one metre would probably make it be too narrow to be practicable, that is not a good reason for permitting the substantial visual harm that would be caused.
8. Due to its width, the side extension would also not pay sufficient regard to SPD paragraph 5.1, which requires such extensions to be at least one metre from the side boundary. The flexibility afforded by SPD paragraph 5.3 in terms of the distance from the boundary on some corner plots would not apply to the appeal scheme, as it would not maintain the openness of the plot.
9. I acknowledge that due to its scale and design, the proposed single storey rear extension would appear as a subordinate addition to the dwelling and it would not be dissimilar to the rear extension at 34 Granville Road. The rear extension would be open to limited views from the public realm and in terms of its size it would be consistent with the SPD guidance at section 3. However, it is an integral part of the proposal before me.
10. Overall, for the above reasons I find that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the proposal would not accord with Policy BE1 of the adopted Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1-Strategic Policies, as it would not be of a high quality design that enhanced the local distinctiveness of the area and contributed to a sense of place, it has not been designed to be appropriate to the identity and context of Hillingdon's buildings, townscapes and views, and it would not improve the quality of the public realm.
11. The proposal would not accord with saved Policy BE13 of the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (UDP), as its appearance would not harmonise with the existing street scene. The proposal would also not accord with saved UDP Policy BE15, as it would not sufficiently harmonise with the scale of the original building. Further, the proposal would not accord with saved UDP Policy BE19, as it would not complement or improve the amenity and character of the area. The absence of a set back of at least one metre from the side boundary would not accord with saved UDP Policy BE22. Moreover, the proposal would not be consistent with the guidance in the SPD, as it would not protect the character and appearance of the street scene and the gaps between properties.

12. Consequently, the proposal would be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework core principle at paragraph 17 to seek and secure high quality design. It would also be inconsistent with section 7, which sets out in more detail how the requirement for good design might be achieved, including at paragraph 60 by seeking to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Other matters

13. I accept that the proposal would modernise and improve the living accommodation at the appeal property for the benefit of the occupants and that it might enable them to remain living there for longer. I acknowledge that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact in relation to the living conditions of the occupiers of adjoining residential properties in respect of their existing levels of light, outlook or privacy and that there have been no objections from local residents. The proposal would retain outdoor amenity space in accordance with the Council's standards and would not result in an unacceptable loss of off-street parking. The Council did not object to the proposal in respect of any of the above matters and I have found no reason to disagree with their assessment in those respects. However, none of the above matters outweigh my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stephen Hawkins

INSPECTOR