

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2017

by AJ Steen BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/16/3166042

60 Bridge Lane, Golders Green, London NW11 0EH

- 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 Prashant Prasad against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 16/6495/HSE, dated 7 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is works to facilitate a loft conversion to include alterations to create a new mansard roof and associated works to an existing residential family dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application forms describe the development as to be retained and retrospective. However, that is not a description of development so I have removed it from the description set out above. I was able to view the completed development when I visited and have taken this into account in coming to my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed alterations to the roof on the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposed alterations to the roof on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers of properties to the sides and rear with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Bridge Lane comprises a mix of large detached and semi-detached houses of a similar style, many of which have been altered in the past such that there is variety within the street scene. A number of surrounding dwellings have been extended at roof level, including mansard roofs that provide additional accommodation within the roof space, with a flat roof above.
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5. The extension at 60 Bridge Lane comprises a steeply pitched mansard roof to the property with a single dormer style window to the front and other windows in the rear elevation, which is a continuation of the wall below up to the flat roof, rather than a mansard. Although of a similar height to surrounding dwellings and maintaining the symmetry of the building, the steep pitch of the roof to the front and sides and lack of windows to the front, other than that to the centre, results in a large blank roof that dominates the building.
6. The dormer window in the centre of the front elevation has a small pitched roof above, which contrasts with the flat roofs of other dormers on mansard roofs on nearby dwellings, appearing incongruous in the centre of the roof and prominent within the roof, drawing attention to the unusual roof shape. The drawings suggest that it extends in front of the roof for its full height, whereas in reality it blends into the bottom of the mansard roof. The design shown on the drawings would further add to its prominence and incongruity.
7. The continuation of the rear wall up to the flat roof above does not reflect the appearance of the original dwelling and harms the appearance of the building. However, the location at the rear means that it is only visible from limited public vantage points such that it is not prominent.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the loft conversion including mansard roof and associated works at 60 Bridge Lane does not reflect the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS NPPF, CS1 and CS5 of the Barnet Core Strategy (CS), Policy DM01 of the Barnet Development Management Policies document (DMP) and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of The London Plan (LP) that seek the highest standards in urban design and that development should respect local context and distinctive local character.
9. I note that there are other steeply pitched mansard roofs a short distance away on the other side of the road and a shallower mansard roof on the adjacent neighbouring property at 58 Bridge Lane. I accept that these form part of the character of the area, but their existence does not overcome the harm I have identified from the proposed development on the character and appearance of this building and the surrounding area.

Living conditions

10. The rear of the proposed dwelling faces toward the rear gardens of dwellings fronting Hallswelle Road, with oblique views over the gardens of dwellings to either side on Bridge Lane. The windows to the rear would overlook those neighbouring properties, but would not materially add to mutual overlooking from existing windows.
11. However, the extension includes a small terrace accessed from the landing in the top floor of the property that could be used for sitting out. The layout of the property means that views toward the garden of 58 Bridge Lane are blocked by the rear part of the building and the layout of the neighbouring property restricts views to the rear garden of no. 64, but it does have clear views of rear gardens of other neighbouring properties at no. 62 and properties fronting Hallswelle Road. Although some trees to the rear of the garden obscure views to some extent, these could be removed in the future.

12. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed terrace would result in a loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers, which would harm their living conditions. As such, it is contrary to Policies CS NPPF, CS1 and CS5 of the CS, Policy DM01 of the DMP and Policies 7.6 of the LP requiring development proposals be designed to allow for adequate privacy for adjoining occupiers.

Other matters

13. I note that the alterations to the dwelling improve the quality of life of the occupants and it is constructed from high quality materials. No objections have been made by surrounding occupiers, although this does not necessarily suggest that they welcome this form of development. However, I do not consider that these matters are sufficient to outweigh the harms that I have identified to the character and appearance of the building and area, or living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

AJ Steen

INSPECTOR