The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 March 2017

by Daniel Hartley BA Hons MTP MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/16/3161927
Nos 13 and 15 St Georges Road, Golders Green, London NW11 0LU

- 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 and Mrs M Shiekh and D Khan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
- The application Ref 16/3758/HSE, dated 7 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2016.
- The development proposed is roof extensions including 1 No front dormer to No 13 and 1 No roof dormer to No 15 St Georges Road.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have used the description of development from the Council's refusal notice as this more precisely describes the appeal proposal. I have adapted the wording of the description of development so that it is clear that there are two dormers proposed.

3. Since the planning application was refused, the adopted Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document "Residential Design Guidance" 2013 has been replaced by the adopted Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document "Residential Design Guidance" 2016 (SPD). I have therefore had regard to this SPD for the purposes of determining this appeal.

4. The Council has confirmed that the informative on the refusal notice incorrectly lists the relevant plans. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal based on the plans accompanying the Council's appeal questionnaire.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises a pair of semi-detached two storey dwellings located within a long residential street known as St Georges Road. It is proposed to erect two box type dormers (one for each dwelling) on the front roof slopes of the dwellings. The dormers would replace existing velux roof lights.

7. Whilst the designs of each of the dwellings in St Georges Road are not identical, the most obvious features when travelling up and down the street are the existence of imposing two storey projecting front bays, simple and predominantly unbroken roof lines (albeit with some velux roof lights) and the existence of trees within the pavements and vegetation within the front gardens. This adds distinctive character to the area.

8. The appellant has drawn my attention to a limited number of properties elsewhere in St Georges Road which already have front roof dormers. However, these are to the west of the appeal site, and some of them are obtrusive and out of proportion with the host property. Overall, I do not consider that the existence of the small number of front dormers in other parts of the street has fundamentally changed the aforementioned character and appearance of the area.

9. The Council state that the existing front dormers in St Georges Road do not appear to have planning permission. The appellants contend that as the Council has not taken enforcement action the appeal proposal should be allowed. It would be a matter for the Council to decide on whether or not they could/would wish to pursue enforcement investigations in respect of the existing dormers. The fact that there may be a small number of front dormers in the street which do not have the benefit of planning permission does not, in itself, equate to reasonable justification for allowing the appeal proposal.

10. I acknowledge that the two dormers would be identical in appearance and scale, that they would not take up more than half the width/depth of the respective front roof slopes and that they would be sufficiently set in from the party walls. In these respects, the proposal would accord with the requirements of paragraph 14.33 of the SPD. However, the dormer windows would be wider than the existing first floor windows and they would not align with them. Hence would appear dominant, out of proportion and poorly designed thereby conflicting with paragraph 14.33 of the SPD.

11. Whilst it may be possible to opt for smaller and better designed roof dormers, this would not overcome my fundamental concern about the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the street-scene. The dormers would unacceptably detract from the predominantly unbroken (accepting that there are some velux window roof lights) and smooth roof lines of most of the properties in St Georges Road. Hence, the dormers would appear as dominant and incongruous additions causing significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. In this respect, the proposal would not accord with the SPD.

12. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, and therefore would not accord with the design aims of Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document 2012; Policy CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document 2012 and the SPD.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge the requirements for additional space and that the proposal would have the effect of increasing the amount of loft room space used by the daughter of one of the appellants. Reference has also been made to toxic

fumes and dust from the road penetrating the existing loft room through the roof tiles, and that the proposal would have positive benefits from a health and well-being point of view. I have not been provided with any evidence about whether or not the daughter could perhaps occupy a different room in the house or whether or not it would be possible to address concerns about toxic fumes and dust by undertaking repairs or other alterations to the existing roof. In any event, neither the desire for additional space, nor the potential health and well-being benefits of the proposal, outweigh my concerns about the significant effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

14. I have considered the references to other front dormers in the wider area (an average of between 12% and 30% of single and twin front dormers in such streets), but these dormers are in different areas. I do not have specific details about the circumstances which led to these dormers being built, and, in any event, I have determined this appeal on the basis of its impact upon St Georges Road. In the context of St Georges Road, I have found that the overall effect upon the character and appearance of this environment would be significantly adverse.

15. None of the other matters raised outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with the development plan for the area. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Daniel Hartley

INSPECTOR