

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2017

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/16/3166239

81 Norbury Hill, Norbury, London SW16 3RU

- 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 Salim Badar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/02993/P, dated 20 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2016.
 - The development is the retention of a loft conversion with rear dormer window.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council refers in its officer report to a canopy that has been erected beyond the rear extension, apparently not in compliance with approved plans. However I note that those works are not on the application form and, as the Council points out, are not shown on the submitted plans. I have therefore not had regard to that issue as part of the scope of this appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Number 81 Norbury Hill comprises a large detached house located on the north western side of the road. It has been substantially rebuilt from its original form following the grant of a planning permission in 2011¹. As such it now appears as a more contemporary style than its neighbours, albeit that its essential form including white rendered walls and a large hipped roof remains consistent with the character of the area. At the rear there is a large single storey flat roof extension with a canopy extending beyond that as part of the roof. Above the flat roof there is a wooden clad extension projecting beyond the rear elevation and extending upwards into a large flat roof dormer. It is the latter works which the appellant is seeking to regularise as they were apparently also not built in accordance with the approved 2011 permission.

¹ Application Ref 11/02615/P

5. The appellant argues that the works contribute to the contemporary style of the building and integrate well with the remodelled design. In particular it is suggested that it forms a feature which is well conceived from a design point of view and cannot be regarded as overdevelopment.
6. I agree with the appellant that the issue is not really one of overdevelopment, but one of design. I also agree that the choice of materials with its wooden clad form, is in keeping with the contemporary nature of the host building, particularly as it complements the materials of an attached outbuilding beyond the rear extension. However it is the scale and bulk of the combined first floor projection/rear dormer which in my view is the real issue of concern.
7. By extending the rear projection upwards into the rear dormer, the works appear in effect as a two storey box like structure, nearly 4m wide and sitting above the ground floor extension, which breaks the eaves line of the rear elevation and has a roof height which is almost level with that of the main roof. In my view it totally dominates the rear elevation, detracting from the form of the main roof in particular, to an extent which causes visual harm. I therefore do not agree with the appellant that it integrates well with the main building.
8. My attention has been drawn to a roof dormer at No 87 Norbury Hill and I agree that is not a particularly sympathetic addition either. I am not aware of the background to that but in any event, it is not a good reason to add another unsympathetic addition to the rear roofscape of properties in this immediate area which I noted that apart from Nos 81 and 87, have their rear roofscapes substantially intact.
9. The appellant refers to the fact that the works are not prominent from the street scene. I agree with that, albeit that the flat roof dormer can still be glimpsed from either direction. However, the works are particularly prominent from adjoining rear gardens and from immediate neighbours in particular. In that respect I took the opportunity to observe the completed works from the adjoining property No 79, which reinforced my view that the large dormer is unsightly and out of character with neighbouring properties where the dominant form of the main hipped roofs largely prevail.
10. The Council has adopted guidance for such development in its Supplementary Planning Document No 2 - Residential Extensions and Alterations 2006 (SPD), which advises that, inter alia '*dormer extensions should not dominate the roof.....dormer extensions should not compromise the integrity of the original roof*'. In my view the completed works are contrary to such guidance and clearly illustrate the visual harm that is caused when there is a major departure from that. The fact that it is at the rear is not a good reason to adopt a design which does not follow such design principles, which in my view, are consistent with good design principles generally. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. That is the case in the current situation.
11. In the light of the above, I find that the character of the local area has been harmed by the completed works. They are therefore in conflict with Policy SP4.2 of the Croydon Local Plan – Strategic Policies 2013, Policies UD2 and UD3

of the Council's Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan) 2006, Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (consolidated with amendments since 2011), as well as guidance in both the Framework and the SPD, in that they compromise the integrity of the original roof, do not respect the height and proportions of surrounding buildings, do not respect local character and are not of a high quality design as a result.

12. Accordingly for the above reasons and conflict with policies, the appeal should be dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR