
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2017

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 24 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/16/3164760

9 The Crescent, London NW2 6HA

- 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 Anthony Umekwe against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 16/4360, dated 5 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the Council determined the planning application, the Brent Local Plan Development Management Policies document (DMP, November 2016) has been adopted, and Brent's Unitary Development Plan (2004) has been superceded. I have therefore referred in this decision to the relevant DMP policies.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site at 9 The Crescent is a mid-terraced property which is located within a predominantly residential area. The Council's concern relates to the proposed dormer extension to the rear roof slope of the property.
 5. The Council's document entitled 'Altering and Extending Your Home – SPG 5' (SPG, September 2002) sets out guidelines for rear dormer windows. It states that these should be: no wider than half the width of the original roof plane; set down from the ridge by at least 0.3m and; set up from the eaves line by at least 0.5m. The development would not meet these stipulations, although it would comply with the other guidelines which require proportionate windows, matching external finishes, and a central position.
 6. No 9 forms part of a terrace of six properties. Of these, only 5 The Crescent has a rear dormer extension which I was able to view from Dollis Hill Avenue. I noted that that dormer is smaller than the proposal before me, as it has been set in from the edges of the roof slope at No 5. The Council also refers to a dormer at 93 Dollis Hill Avenue, and some more distant examples. The
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appellant refers to examples in the immediate street scene, but does not specify their locations. From my observations on my visits, I found that dormers of the scale proposed are in the minority in the surrounding area, and so I conclude that they are not a prevalent part of the area's built character.

7. Although not particularly visible from the wider area, the rear elevation of the appeal site can nonetheless be glimpsed from public areas via the gaps between the properties on the north side of Dollis Hill Avenue. The elevated position of No 9 on higher ground would augment the visual impact of the new dormer on the surrounding area.
8. By virtue of its scale, whereby it would take up the whole width and height of the existing roof slope, I conclude that the new dormer would appear overly dominant and out of proportion with the existing property. It would fail to preserve the appearance of No 9, and would thus unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would thus fail to comply with DMP Policy DMP 1 which, amongst other things, requires development to complement the locality by virtue of its scale and design. It would also conflict with guidance set out in the SPG, and no compelling reason exists for a departure from these policy provisions.
9. I note the appellant's position that the SPG guidelines are antiquated. Dating from 2002, the SPG is now of some age. However, it is an adopted Council document which remains current, and which amplifies the relevant development plan policies with useful design guidance. Its purpose of seeking to maintain the high standard of residential buildings in the area by seeking well-designed extensions and alterations is consistent with the aims of the DMP and of the National Planning Policy Framework.
10. I have been referred to another appeal decision¹ within the same Council area. However, the full details of this case are not before me, and so I cannot be certain that it represents a direct parallel to the appeal scheme. In any event, each case is to be considered on its own merits.
11. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/T5150/W/16/3143531