
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2017

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 04 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/16/3163874

27 Athenaeum Road, Whetstone, London N20 9AL

- 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 Christopher Pontikis against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 16/4972/HSE, dated 27 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is single storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council, in its decision notice, refers to its Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance (the SPD) to which I have applied some weight due to its role in supporting the relevant development plan policies.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. No 27 is an attractive, well proportioned, large dwelling in a prominent corner plot location. It's fairly unique design in the context of the immediate surroundings further draws attention to it, albeit in a streetscene with a variety of different building designs.
 5. Although attached to the adjacent dwelling in Oakleigh Gardens, No 27's main front elevation faces Athenaeum Road, with distinctive two storey bay features, one of which is on the corner of the dwelling and the other adjacent to a front garden wall dividing the front forecourt area from private garden space. That garden area is also screened by roadside fencing. Despite that garden end of the front elevation, beyond the bay, being adjacent to part of the private screened off garden, a significant amount of it, including part of the ground floor, is still visible over the fence. As such, it still reads as being very much part of that main frontage, particularly as it continues the same architectural detailing, materials and window designs.
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6. The proposal would have the roadside garden screen fencing in front of it, and it would be set away from the front site boundary to some extent. However, a significant part of it would still be clearly visible above that fence within the streetscene, and more so when seen across the more open forecourt of the house. One side of the proposed extension would replace part of the dividing garden wall but it would be noticeably higher than that existing fairly subservient feature, with the overall height of the ridge also being just below the first floor window. It would also be in close proximity to the adjacent existing and distinctive bay feature, and be of noticeably greater forward projection and width than it. The greater width would stand out more due to its flat frontage compared with the angled elements of that existing adjacent feature.
7. Given the significant degree to which that existing end of the front elevation contributes to its overall appearance within the streetscene, the proposed extension, for the above reasons, would stand out as an incongruous addition. It would materially disrupt the well balanced features and high degree of continuity of that existing elevation, to an extent that would be likely to draw the eye disproportionately in the context of the streetscene in that vicinity. This would be despite the proposed use of materials to match those of the existing dwelling and the proposed complementary, albeit wider, sash windows with brick arching over.
8. The appellant draws attention to another development at No 7 claiming this to be more obtrusive. However, I saw that the circumstances of that development, being a comprehensively designed modern flatted scheme, albeit on a prominent corner site, were different to that of the appeal proposal, which I have in any case considered on its own merits.
9. For the above reasons, the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to policy CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) and policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) and the SPD which together, in respect of this issue, require that development respects local context and distinctive local character and represents high quality design.
10. The Council, in its decision notice also refers to policy CS1 of the Core Strategy. However, despite reference to policy CS5, that particular policy relates to the Council's place shaping strategy and is not directly relevant to this appeal in relation to a house extension.
11. The appellant highlights that no objections were raised by local residents to the proposal. However, I have determined this appeal on its planning merits taking into account all material considerations.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR