
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2017

by Graham M Garnham BA BPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/17/3169685
32 Ruffle Close, West Drayton, UB7 9BP

- 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 Ms Rachel Chong against the decision of London Borough of Hillingdon Council.
 - The application Ref 60123/APP/2016/4083, dated 8 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is garage conversion to habitable room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for garage conversion to habitable room at 32 Ruffle Close, West Drayton, UB7 9BP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 60123/APP/2016/4083, dated 8 November 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: numbers GTD632-01 & GTD632-02, and 1:1250 scale site location plan.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surface of the conversion works hereby approved shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The conversion of the garage to a habitable room shall not take place until a new car parking space, sited as shown on drawing no. GTD632-02, has been provided in accordance with Section 8 of the GHA Trees Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report (dated 31 January 2017). Development works shall be carried out in compliance with Section 8 and Section 10 of this Report, and the tree protection measures put in place shall thereafter be retained.

Procedural Matter

2. The site visit was arranged on an "access required" basis. Nobody answered the door when I arrived. In the event, I was able to see all I needed to en
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route to and from the front door. I am therefore able to proceed to a decision without prejudice to the interests of either party.

Main Issue

3. I consider that this is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an extended end-of-terrace house with an integral garage. Planning permission is needed to convert the garage to a habitable room because of a condition placed on the approved scheme to build the estate, which requires the retention of garages for the parking of cars.
5. The Council does not object to the minor works to the front elevation, replacing the garage door with a window. A planning condition would be needed to require the use of matching materials, in the interests of a satisfactory appearance of the building. Subject to this, I consider that the works would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area, and I have no reason to take a different view from the Council.
6. The loss of the garage to parking requires the creation of a replacement parking space on the front lawn. This will involve ground works near a well-established silver birch tree, and cars manoeuvring close to the trunk. The Council refused planning permission because no tree survey and arboricultural implication assessment had been submitted, to demonstrate the protection and long term retention of the tree.
7. The estate is well-designed and laid out, at quite a high density. Adequate off street parking is therefore important. A few relatively mature trees have a significant role in "softening" the local street scene. The tree in front of the appeal property is one such tree. Its siting and shallow root structure make it vulnerable to the parking changes proposed at the appeal site.
8. The grounds of appeal have been accompanied by an Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report, dated 31 January 2017. It has been prepared for GHA Trees by a suitably qualified professional. It indicates that the retained tree requires protection in accordance with industry best practice and BS5837:2012 recommendations. The Report concludes that the tree can be protected during development activities and, subject to the precautionary measures set out, the proposal would not be injurious to the tree.
9. The Report sets out Tree Protection Measures and a Preliminary Method Statement for Development Works at Section 8. These include a tree protection barrier, the use of a no-dig surfacing construction method and other operational precautions. Section 10 contains recommendations for site supervision and the sharing of knowledge and commitment to the protection of the tree. I consider that incorporating these provisions within a planning condition would ensure the protection and healthy retention of the tree.
10. It is also necessary to impose a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty.

11. Subject to the conditions I consider to be necessary, I conclude that the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the locality. I find no conflict with Policies BE19 & BE38 in the London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (1998). These policies require development to complement or improve the amenity and character of a residential area and retain landscape features of merit. There would be compliance with the Council's Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document on *Residential Extensions* (2008). This requires trees to be protected in accordance with British Standard recommendations.
12. There is therefore no reason to withhold planning permission and I allow the appeal.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR