The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2017

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2nd May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/17/3170097
48 Woodlands Road, Isleworth TW7 6JU

- 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 M McDonald against the decision of the London Borough of Hounslow Council.
- The application Ref 01230/48/P1, dated 6 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2016.
- The development proposed is a single storey rear extension and two storey side extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The Council's concerns relate to the design of the side extension and the potential for it to result in a terracing effect, should the neighbouring property be extended in a similar fashion.

4. The property is part of a row of similar pairs of semi-detached dwellings. This side of the street is characterised by the generally uniform design and form of the properties and also the rhythm of development that results from the gaps between them at first floor level. There are some variations in the house designs and a number of properties have been extended to the side at first floor level. However, within this particular part of the road, which lies opposite the Woodlands Grove Conservation Area, the number of extensions is limited and the immediate area has generally retained the original spacing between properties which is of significant importance to its overall character.

5. The Council is concerned that the new works would extend up to the side boundary and as such, would make no provision for rainwater goods. Alternative arrangements would therefore be necessary and have not been shown on the plans. I note that further up the road, an extension has been built with a side facing parapet wall and an internal gutter. This results in an uncharacteristic elevation to the side of the property which is not in keeping

with the original detailing. This is not shown on the submitted plans but the appellant has not addressed this concern within the grounds of appeal.

6. A further concern is that because the site tapers to the rear, there would be difficulties in achieving the uniform hipped roof shown on the plans. Again this is not a matter addressed in the appellant's submission. Although I anticipate that this concern could be overcome, whilst maintaining a satisfactory appearance in relation to the front of the property, the failure to address this matter adds to my concerns.

7. The potential for the important spaces between these dwellings to be eroded, which would fundamentally alter the character of this road, is my main concern. I acknowledge that the front of the extension at first floor level would be set back by a metre and the roof would be lower. The inclusion of these features would ensure that the extension appeared distinct and relatively subservient to the main dwelling and would retain the original character and proportions of the house design. However, a one metre set back would not avoid the development of a terracing effect given the lack of space between these properties and the fact that the proposal would be built up to the side boundary.

8. I acknowledge that two nearby neighbouring properties in this section of road have been extended, one with a first floor set back, the other without. A narrow gap at first floor level has been retained but this together with the hipped roofs and the changes in levels does not retain the rhythm or character of the road. I have not been provided with details of the circumstances that led to this arrangement and I am unclear when the decisions were taken. I do not find that this relationship results in a positive contribution to the street scene.

9. Further up the road, there are a greater number of side extensions with some short sections having entirely lost the original rhythm of development. However, despite these, the distinctive character remains overall. I have no evidence with regard to the circumstances or timings of these existing developments. The appellant has made reference to a permission granted at 90 Woodlands Road in 2014. I have not been provided with the details of this although the appellant describes the proposal as having the same design principles and set back. I noted however that the properties have an alleyway between them which would maintain some separation and perhaps also avoid the Council's concerns with regard to rainwater goods.

10. The limited set back of the proposed side extension, together with its position on the shared boundary, would not be sufficient to prevent a terracing effect occurring. This would detract from the existing character of this part of the road in particular. The failure to address the other design issues adds to this concern. I find that these shortcomings result in the proposal representing poor design in this context. It would conflict with the design objectives of Policies CC1(a), CC2(k) and SC7(e & h) of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 as it would fail to respond sensitively to the site and the character of the area; and it would not respect the surrounding established context. As these policies generally accord with the design requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, I afford them considerable weight.

11. The policies require that regard be had for the design guidance set out in Supplementary Planning Documents. I have not been referred to any such documents. The Council rely on their Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Residential Extension Guidelines 2003. This is a document of some age and it no longer relates to the current development plan policies and pre-dates the design requirements of the *Framework*. I afford it only limited weight in these circumstances.

12. I am mindful however, that the SPG represents the only published guidance with regard to design and it has not been withdrawn by the Council. The proposal accords with the guidance in relation to the form of the extension and its height and width. Importantly, it also accepts that a minimum of a one metre set back should be included to avoid the creation of a terracing effect. It specifically seeks to avoid extensions such as this, with walls that are not parallel to the main house and it also requires that the building be set off the side boundary to allow hanging gutters. There is conflict with these elements of the guidance and I am not satisfied that limiting the set back to the minimum, given the small separation distance between these houses, achieves its design objectives. However, there are elements that gain some support from the SPG.

13. I have considered all the matters put forward by the appellant. Although I have limited detail of the specific permission that is referred to, I have had regard to the assertions made in relation to the similarities of the proposals. I have less detail of other permissions with regard to the extensions that already exist. These extensions are more prevalent in other sections of this road and they do not represent positive features with regard to the overall character of the area. The SPG offers some weight in favour of the approach adopted, although shortcomings with regard to the details also result in some conflict with its requirements. In any event, I afford greater weight to the design conflict with the development plan policies.

14. Overall, on balance, the matters in support of the proposal are not sufficient to outweigh my concerns. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR