The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2017

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/17/3168962
1 Holly Avenue, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 1EZ

- 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 Miss N Mehta against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
- The application Ref P/4090/16, dated 24 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2016.
- The development proposed is described as two-storey side single and two-storey rear extensions.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling sited in a prominent position at the junction of Holly Avenue and Taunton Way within a predominantly residential area of suburban character. It and its adjoining dwelling, 46 Taunton Way, are set in a wedge shaped plot. No 46 shows signs of modification, including roof alterations, which has affected the symmetry of the pair.

4. The appellant correctly states in her personal statement that some other local properties, including that next door, have been extended and modified in the past. This indicates to me, however, that the Council is not averse to the principle of allowing the extension of properties, when acceptably designed.

5. Judging from its external condition the dwelling is in need of renovation, and some visual benefit would arise from the demolition and removal of two dilapidated structures within the property's curtilage.

6. The appellant's agent asserts that:

Considerable effort has been made to put forward proposals that would complement the design, character and appearance of the area and the host dwelling. The highest architectural quality is envisioned for this development of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm; and comprises details and materials that complement the local architectural character.

7. I do not share the thrust of this assessment. In my view, any visual benefit gained from renovation and the removal of the site's dilapidated structures, would be wholly negated by the poor design of the proposed development and its harmful effect on the public realm.

8. In this regard, I find the design to be contrived, being seemingly more concerned with maximizing floorspace on an awkwardly shaped piece of land than with complementing the design and appearance of the host property, or with fitting acceptably into its surroundings.

9. The bulkiness and utilitarian appearance of the proposal allied to the disharmonious crown shape of the roof would prove highly noticeable in this prominent position. The site would also take on an overdeveloped appearance, harmful to local visual amenities.

10. I conclude that this proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policies 7.4, 7.6 of the London Plan, policy CS1 B of the Harrow Core Strategy and policies DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Local Plan Policies, which, in combination, require new development to be of a high standard of design and respectful of local architecture and character.

Other matters

11. There is no apparent dispute between the parties that the site falls within an area identified as Flood Zone 3A & 3B in local flood maps. The Council, in accordance with local policy, considers that a flood risk assessment (FRA) or details of surface water disposal should have been submitted at application stage, whilst the appellant's agent suggests that the matter could be dealt with by condition, in the event of the appeal succeeding.

12. The appellant says that she was not asked to provide such information at application stage.

13. In the light of my conclusions on the main issue, whether or not this matter could have been dealt with by condition possibly becomes academic. However, having regard to the Environment Agency's advice referred to at paragraph 047 of the *Planning Practice's Guidance* on Flood Risk, even for minor development such as proposed, a FRA is required to accompany planning applications in Flood Zone 3.

14. Accordingly, I consider the Council did not adopt an inappropriate stance on flood risk. Moreover, given that the Council had raised the matter when refusing the application, there was no good reason why a FRA should not have been prepared for the appeal.

15. The Council also suggests that neighbours would be adversely affected as a result of visual impact. To my mind, however, the harm experienced by local residents in these terms would not materially affect their living conditions. Rather, the harm would be more generally experienced relating to the proposal's appearance, arising from the damaging aspects of the design I identified when dealing with the main issue.

16. I have taken account of all other matters raised in the representations, but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR