

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by Darren Hendley BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/17/3168806

141 Poplar Road South, Merton Park, London SW19 3JZ

- 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 N Hasan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 16/P4649, dated 29 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension, rear extension and a loft conversion with a rear dormer and rooflights to the front.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect on the character and appearance of the building and the area, and the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property at 139 Poplar Road South with regard to visual impact.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a hipped roof two storey semi-detached house that has been extended by a single storey extension which runs the length of the side of the house. Poplar Road South comprises of semi-detached houses which have predominantly maintained their hipped roof form, and a number of these properties have been extended. No 143, the other half of the semi-detached pair, has been extended by a two storey side extension and a rear single storey extension. No 139 has been extended by a single storey side extension, a rear dormer extension and, uncharacteristically for the area, is gable ended.
 4. The proposals represent a significant increase in scale and bulk to the property. The proposed two storey side extension would project from near the front elevation of the property well beyond the existing rear elevation, with the single storey element of the rear extension projecting further beyond that. The proposals are significantly greater in scale than the extensions on the side and rear of No 143.
 5. The hipped roof form of the front of the two storey side extension would be in keeping with the property and would balance with the extension on No 143,
-

when viewed from the road. However the length, scale and massing of the side elevation wall would be clearly visible from the streetscene because the house at No 139 is well set back. Such visibility of side extensions, in particular on this scale, is not a characteristic of the streetscene. The scale of the proposals would be out of proportion with appeal property and would erode the character and appearance of the area.

6. The proposals would also introduce a significant amount of flat roof to the design of the property, including the rear part of the two storey side extension, the flat roofed dormer and the rear single storey extension. This amount of flat roof would significantly detract from the current hipped roof form and materials of the appeal property. Whilst there would be limited visibility of these flat roofed elements from the streetscene, I do not consider this justifies introducing what will appear, with the amount of flat roof proposed, as a discordant feature on the property.
7. I am aware that No 139 has flat roofed rear dormer window. This is a more modest amount of flat roofed extension compared to the appeal proposals however, and does not appear as an overly discordant feature. I also consider that whilst there are other examples of flat roofs in Poplar Road South, these are not a prevailing characteristic.
8. In respect of extensions which have taken place at Nos 142 and 150, I note these properties are sited less prominently in the streetscene, so the side walls of their extensions are not exposed to the same extent as would result from the appeal proposal. No 1 Leafield Road is also sited less prominently in the streetscene, with the extension staggered in form to take account of the boundary with the neighbouring property on Mostyn Road, which itself partially screens the extension. I am satisfied that other extensions in the area, including those which the Appellant has drawn my attention to, are sufficiently different to the appeal proposals in respect of character and appearance, and as such they do not alter my views.
9. I note the Appellant's comments that the single storey rear extension, on its own, is within permitted development limits. I have to determine the appeal proposals before me however, noting that this extension is integral to the overall appeal proposals and is physically attached to the proposed two storey extension. I do not consider it can be assessed separately, on its merits.
10. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the appeal property and the Poplar Road South street scene contrary to Policy CS 14 of the Merton Core Planning Strategy (2011), Policies DM D1, D2 and D3 of the Merton Sites and Policies Plan (2014) (MSPP), and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) which require development to provide design appropriate to its context and be sympathetic to local character and appearance.
11. The Merton Residential Extensions, Alterations and Conversions Supplementary Planning Guidance (2001) (SPG) is dated and relates to the superseded Unitary Development Plan. Whilst I attach limited weight to the SPG, the appeal proposals would conflict with it as far as it advises that flat roofs tend not to fit in on residential properties.

Living Conditions

12. The appeal property is positioned forward of the house at No 139, with the boundary between the two properties formed at the rear by a close boarded fence. The two storey side extension would run alongside the boundary, apart from a small gap to accommodate the guttering, although for most of its length, would be sited well forward of the house at No 139. As the house at No 139 is well set back and benefits from a substantial front garden area, the two storey side extension would not appear visually intrusive or domineering to the front of this property.
13. Where the proposed two storey extension runs along the side of house at No 139, the height drops to the flat roof level and would then be single storey. This would be nearest No 139's single storey side extension, with windows on the side of the original house at No 139 though further set back from the boundary. With this relationship between the side of No 139 and appeal proposals, I do not consider this would be visually intrusive or over-domineering to occupiers of No 139.
14. Overall, I conclude therefore that there would be no significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 139. In this regard the proposals would comply with Policies DM D2 and DM D3 of the MSPP. Whilst the SPG advises that side extensions should be set in 1 metre from the property boundary, with the particular positioning of the appeal property and No 139, I do not consider this causes undue harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 139.
15. Whilst I consider the proposals to be acceptable with regard to the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 139, this does not outweigh my conclusions in respect of the effect on the character and appearance of the property and area.

Conclusion

16. The appeal proposals would significantly harm the character and appearance of the building and the area, and accordingly I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Hendley

INSPECTOR