

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2017

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3171011
21 Suffolk Road, Barnes, Surrey, SW13 9NA

- 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 Sam Allpass against the decision Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/2268/HOT, dated 7 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is ground floor rear and side extensions and front dormer extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to ground floor rear and side extensions.
2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted insofar as it relates to a front dormer extension at 21 Suffolk Road, Barnes, Surrey, SW13 9NA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/2268/HOT, dated 7 June 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans solely insofar as they directly relate to the approved works: 16/617/E001, E002, E100, E101, E110A, E120, P100D, P101B, P110D, P111F & P120A.

Preliminary Matter

3. I consider that there are two principal and distinct parts of the proposal; the ground floor extensions and the front dormer. I therefore would be able to issue a split decision in this case.

Main Issues

4. The main issue relating to the ground floor extensions is the effect on living conditions for neighbours.
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5. The main issue in respect of the front dormer is the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Ground floor extensions

6. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling on a corner plot in an area of broadly similar homes with an established suburban character and pleasing appearance. The ground floor proposal is for the creation of substantial new floorspace for the most part under a flat roof.
7. There is an unusual shared rear boundary arrangement on this pair of semi-detached homes in that the appeal site 'flares out' somewhat across the part of the rear of the adjoining home. The result is that there is presently a largely unused and fenced triangle of land to the side of the existing rear extension, a structure which is to be demolished. The plan would take the proposed extension to the boundary and this would be close to, and almost beginning to head across, the main downstairs rear glazing of the neighbouring property. This might be acceptable to a modest degree but unfortunately the scheme before me has a considerable depth of around 5 metres and a boundary height of about 2.6m rising in a short distance to some 2.9m. It would also be sited on the important western flank of the neighbouring property. To my mind the extension would be over-bearing and visually intrusive for people within and immediately outside the neighbouring home. The dominating effect would be unneighbourly.
8. I appreciate that the existing neighbours did not object but I have to consider the inherent amenity of the home in the long term. I note that the existing extension to be demolished is a slighter higher structure than the proposal - however it is of markedly less depth and does not run right along the shared boundary. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue associated with this part of the proposal.
9. Policy DM DC5 of the Development Management Plan 2011 (DMP) is relevant. Amongst other matters, it seeks the protection of residential amenity for neighbours to development. This is reflected in the objectives of the Council's SPD 'House Extensions and External Alterations' (2015) (SPD). I conclude that the ground floor extensions would conflict with this development plan policy and with a corresponding key purpose of the guidance.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the ground floor extensions would have unacceptable adverse effects on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly the appeal for this part of the proposal is dismissed.

Front dormer

11. The scheme is for a small pitched roof dormer set on the part of the roof slope which lies some way behind the most forward and prominent part of the front of the dwelling, a large hipped shared gable. This forward projection is the part of the pair of properties which is the visually important and attractive element of the composition. To my mind the planned dormer because of its size and set-back in subsidiary position would not disrupt that sense of

symmetry and pleasing design which one senses looking at the two dwellings in particular or the wider streetscene. Whilst I am at one with the Council on the need to protect suburban architectural quality, in this instance it would be a very subtle and not harmful change. I did note that there are a small number of other dormers found locally and for the most part I did not find them to be visually offensive or detracting from the streetscene.

12. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM DC1 of the DMP are relevant. Taken together they call for, amongst other matters, protection of local distinctiveness with high quality design and suitable scale and form sympathetic to the host building and its wider setting. This is reflected in the key objectives of the SPD which although discouraging on alterations to roofs at the front of properties cannot be expected to cover every eventuality. I conclude that the front dormer would not conflict with the cited development plan policies and the relevant aesthetic purposes of the guidance.
13. In terms of conditions which could apply to the front dormer the Council suggests the standard commencement condition along with a requirement for works to be carried out in accordance with listed, approved, plans. I agree with this as it provides certainty. A condition relating to matching materials is also suggested and this would be in the interests of visual amenity.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the front dormer would not have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly the appeal for this part of the proposal is allowed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR