

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2017

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3173875

57 St James Avenue, Hampton Hill TW12 1HL

- 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 Peter Kralj against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 16/4758/HOT was refused by notice dated 16 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion to provide habitable space, including the installation of two roof lights on the front roof slope and one on the rear roof slope; barn hips to the sides and two dormer windows to the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The address of the site in the above heading is taken from the application form, although the Council has described the appeal property as being on St James's Avenue. From what I saw, the road signs in the footways of this highway refer to St James's Avenue and therefore I shall do likewise.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached mainly 2-storey house in a predominantly residential area wherein buildings vary in design, scale and general appearance. Consequently, there is considerable variety to existing development in the local street scene to which No 57 belongs.
 5. The proposal is to extend and alter No 57 at roof level to enable additional living accommodation to be provided that would be served by new dormers, roof lights and windows. The main roof of the finished building would be substantial in scale and mass mainly due to the generous distance between the eaves and ridge. The considerable expanse of front roof slope with the part gable, part hipped ends would cause the new roof to appear overly large and bulky. As a result, the proposal would appear out of scale with the host building and would significantly detract from its intrinsic character.
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6. The proposed extended building would be noticeably more substantial in built form than the existing dwelling. As a result, the appeal scheme would cause No 57 to gain prominence in views from St James's Avenue notwithstanding its position set back from the highway. When seen from this road, the presence of the completed building would not be so imposing as to overbear in the local street scene. The disproportionately large main roof would, however, draw the eye because the completed building would have an awkward 'top-heavy' appearance. That a new continuous ridgeline would be introduced roughly parallel to the road would visually accentuate the mass of the proposal. Consequently, the finished dwelling would be obtrusive in the local street scene even among the varied built form within it.
7. The excessive bulk of the proposed development, to which the two new side dormers would contribute, would also be evident from the adjacent rear gardens. While some elements of the appeal scheme would not be readily visible from the street, they would nonetheless form part of the characteristics of the local area as experienced and appreciated from nearby houses and gardens. For all of these reasons, the proposal would have a deleterious effect on the character and appearance of the area.
8. In reaching this conclusion, I note that the external materials would match those of the existing dwelling and that the Council raises no objection to the new roof lights. During the site visit, I saw that several properties in the local area had been extended and altered at roof level although most examples, including those with dormers, were appropriate in design and size for their context. I also acknowledge that planning permission has recently been granted to enlarge No 57 with roof level alterations and the introduction of dormers. However, as the approved scheme differs markedly to the proposal before me notably in the shape of the main roof; the position and size of the dormers; and the fenestration there are few direct parallels to be drawn between the respective schemes. Consequently, I attach limited weight to the recently approved scheme in support of the appeal. In any event, each proposal should be considered on its own merits, as I have done.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the importance of achieving high quality design and notes that development should respond to local character and add to the overall qualities of an area. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *House Extensions and External Alterations* also states that the roof extensions should not dominate the original roof. For the reasons given, the proposal would fail to adhere to these principles.
10. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, it conflicts with Policy CP7 of the Council's Core Strategy and Policy DM DC 1 of its Development Management Plan. These policies aim to ensure that new development respects local character and connects with, and adds to, its surroundings, thereby contributing to creating places of high design quality.
11. Whether or not the proposal or parts of it would qualify as permitted development, I have assessed the development for which planning permission is sought and as determined by the Council. While the appellant considers that elements of the appeal scheme could be implemented through the exercise of

permitted development rights, this possibility is insufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified with regard to the main issue.

12. Reasonably generous distances would separate the finished house and neighbouring properties and so the proposal would not seriously harm the living conditions of others, as the Officer's report suggests. Consequently, I find no conflict with DMP Policy DM DC 5 insofar as it aims to safeguard residential amenity. The additional living accommodation would enhance the living conditions of the appellant and his family. Others raise no objection. However, none of these considerations alter my central finding that the proposed development is objectionable for the reasons given.
13. The appellant considers that the Council did not consider the proposal properly and that the Officer's report contains fundamental errors and was written before the Council's site visit took place. However, my remit is solely to determine the appeal.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal is not a sustainable form of development and that appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR