
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/17/3173511

41 Thornhill Road, Ickenham, London UB10 8SG

- 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 Mrs O Gaffney against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 48436/APP/2016/4513, dated 16 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as 'part single-storey, part two-storey side extension'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of the proposal in the header above is taken from the original application form. The Council's decision notice and the appellant's appeal documentation describe the proposal simply as a two storey side extension.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located within a residential area and comprises a bay fronted two storey semi-detached house. Around half way along the flank of the building there is an unusual flat roof side projection at the first floor level with the overhang providing an open porch beneath. Between this feature and the rear of the house there is a wider single storey side projection with a lean-to roof. The latter projection, which houses the kitchen, is not fully discernible in public views from the street because it is partially screened by a detached flat roof garage. The proposal seeks to replace the two side projections and the detached garage with a 4.2m wide two storey side extension.
5. Both the parties refer to the Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document 2008 (SPD). A thread that runs throughout this guidance is the need for extensions to appear subordinate.
6. Paragraph 5.10 of the SPD specifically relates to the width of two storey side extensions. It sets out that, 'The width and height of the extension in relation

- to the original house should be considerably less than that of the original house and be between half and two thirds of the main house width depending on the plot size and character of the area’.
7. In terms of the ‘original house’, there is no dispute between the parties that the single storey kitchen projection forms part of the original house. At the rear, the full width of the original house is approximately 6.3m and two thirds of that would be around 4.2m.
 8. However, in undertaking the two thirds calculation, it is ‘the main house width’ that paragraph 5.10 refers to. Unfortunately, the term does not appear to be defined in the SPD. Nevertheless, paragraph 1.4 explains that the sketches in the Design Guide are intended to help a reader in understanding how to design and contribute to a high quality residential environment in the borough. The relevant supporting sketch on page 21 of the SPD relates the illustrated side extensions to the width of the main two storey front elevation of a house, with the projection of the extension being from its two storey flank.
 9. The width of the main two storey front elevation of the appeal property is approximately 4.1m and two thirds of that would be around 2.7m. Strict adherence to the SPD’s calculation would therefore indicate a maximum 2.7m wide extension projecting from the two storey flank wall, considerably less than the 4.2m proposed. However, there is flexibility to deviate from the calculated width given paragraph 5.10 ends with the comment ‘depending on the plot size and character of the area’.
 10. In terms of the plot size, the proposed 4.2m wide extension would still maintain in excess of the minimum 1m set back from the boundary as specified by paragraph 5.1 of the SPD. With regard to the character of the area, the dwellings in this part of Thornhill Road are of a mixed size and form. However, a crucial consideration is the visual relationship with the attached neighbouring property, No 39 Thornhill Road. That property occupies a narrower plot and has an existing two storey side projection. The projection is of a modest width and its flat roof form means there is no high level bulk above the eaves level to the main part of the house.
 11. The proposed 4.2m wide extension at the appeal property would add a considerable degree of bulk, including above the eaves level. It would result in No 39 and No 41 becoming wholly unbalanced as a pair. This incongruous relationship would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
 12. The proposed 4.2m two storey width would also be greater than the 4.1m two storey width of the existing building. It is acknowledged the proposal meets or exceeds further aspects of the SPD in terms of the set back from the front elevation of the house and the set down from the ridge. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of these considerations would not overcome the impact of the disproportionate width and the associated bulk of the proposal. As a consequence, it would fail to appear as a subordinate addition to the house and would be harmful to its character and appearance.
 13. In light of these findings, it is concluded that the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. The development would thereby conflict with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies 2012 and Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary

Development Plan Saved Policies 2007. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that new development within residential areas complements or improves the character of the area. They also seek to ensure that extensions harmonise with the scale, form and proportions of the original building.

Other matters

14. It is understood that after the refusal of an earlier scheme, the appellant received advice from the Council that the single storey kitchen projection could be taken into account when assessing the width of the proposed extension. However, as paragraph 2.4 of the SPD makes clear, the advice given is informal officer advice and not a decision. The advice has no direct bearing in the determination of the appeal which has been considered on its merits.
15. The benefits of the proposal are acknowledged, in particular the increase in the amount of living accommodation at a family home. Nevertheless, the benefits do not outweigh the identified harm.
16. The Council's officer report raises concerns in respect of the absence of a tree survey and details of mitigation. As this matter does not affect the conclusion on the main issue, which is determinative in this appeal, it is not considered further.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C J Ford

APPOINTED PERSON