

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: 30 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3173760

9 Marsh Farm Road, Twickenham TW2 6SH

- 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 Martin Leach against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 17/0032/HOT was refused by notice dated 6 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a side extension to the existing dwelling at first and second floor levels over part of the existing yard, with part pitched roof and roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. I have dealt with another appeal¹ on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey house with a gated yard at the side and rear within a predominantly residential area, wherein buildings vary in scale, design, age and general appearance. In the vicinity of the site, properties line one side of Marsh Farm Road with a retaining wall, security fencing and railway embankment on the other. The site is not within a conservation area nor is No 9 identified as a building of townscape merit.
5. The new side addition would result in a significantly larger dwelling with much wider front and rear elevations and a part hipped, part flat roof. When seen from Marsh Farm Road, the new flat roof element would stand immediately behind, and partly above, the proposed pitched roof slopes. This arrangement would create an awkward juxtaposition of different roof forms to one side of the dwelling because there would be an abrupt transition between one and the other. This would draw the eye because it would noticeably differ the simple

¹ Ref APP/L5810/D/17/3173758

- pitched roof form of other properties that generally predominate along the same side of the road. While the existing flat rear roof and sidewall of No 9 is evident from the highway, this closely relates to the ridgeline of the dwelling. Consequently, there is greater visual continuity to the existing roof form than would be achieved with the appeal scheme in place.
6. From the street, the additional built form at high level would also accentuate the sharp contrast in scale, proportions and roof style between No 9 and the attached property, which retains its 2-storey built form and hipped roof. By exacerbating these differences, the proposal would further unbalance the built form of No 9 and its attached counterpart, which would be obtrusive in the local street scene.
 7. At the rear, the finished building would visually 'read' as a 3-storey property, with a flat roof extending across almost the entire width of the dwelling. This would give the property an awkward 'top-heavy' appearance with the roof level element visually dominating the rear elevation of the completed building. The height and shape of the roof, with its large box-like appearance, would also jar with the 2-storey pitched roof profile of other nearby buildings that generally prevail in the local area. Although the new extension would be set back from the properties on either side, the excessive scale and bulk of the completed dwelling at roof level would still be evident from neighbouring rear gardens.
 8. Below roof level at the front of No 9, the proposal would follow the build line of the host building. The arched front porch would mirror that of the existing dwelling, giving the general impression from the road of a separate dwelling rather than a side extension. With a relatively wide opening at ground floor level containing what would probably resemble a garage door (rather than an entrance to the yard), the proposal would contrast with the pattern and size of openings in most other properties along Marsh Farm Road. To my mind, the wide ground floor opening would visually dominate the front façade of the extended building and conflict unsatisfactorily with the modest-sized openings in the front of No 9 and the attached building. Consequently, a discordant element would be introduced to the built frontage along Marsh Farm Road. While the adjacent property, which is No 8, has an integral garage, this dwelling has a modern design and such a feature is more typical of its period compared to the traditional style of No 9.
 9. In reaching these conclusions, I acknowledge the use of matching external materials and note that the window openings would complement that of the host building. The upper sidewall to the proposed extension would be set back 1-metre from the site's boundary beyond which is No 8. This set back would be in accordance with the advice in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *House Extensions and External Alterations* (SPD). The current space between Nos 8 and 9 to be occupied by the appeal scheme contributes little positively to the street scene and, if anything, is at odds with the tightly knit pattern of existing development.
 10. The appellant considers that the proposal would constitute infill development to which a different policy than those cited by the Council applies. Whether or not that is the case, the main determining factor in this appeal is whether the appeal scheme would be assimilated into the prevailing character and appearance of the local area. Policy DM HO 2 of the Council's Development

Management Plan (DMP), which deals with infill development, contains a similar requirement. It states that such proposals must reflect the character of the surrounding area. The accompanying text to this policy also notes that infill development should reflect the scale, mass, height and form of its neighbours.

11. With its side and rear yard, the site is unique in the area that I saw and so the scope for development may well vary to the general parameters set out in planning policy and the Council's SPD. Even so, both the DMP and SPD offer some flexibility in bringing forward proposals by acknowledging that there are different ways to ensure that development harmonises with the host building and the surrounding area. In any event, each proposal should be assessed on its own merits, which I have done in this instance.
12. 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. For the reasons given, the proposal would not adhere to these important principles.
13. Against that background, I conclude on the main issue that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policy CP7 of the Council's Core Strategy and DMP Policies DC DM 1 and DC DM 5. These policies broadly aim to ensure that development achieves high quality design, connects with and adds to its surroundings and avoids visual intrusion.
14. The proposal would make efficient use of the space at the side of No 9 and, once complete, the additional living space would enhance the living conditions of the appellant. However, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified in relation to the main issue.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and taking into account the absence of objections from others, I conclude that the proposal is not a sustainable form of development and that appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR