
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2017

by Daniel Hartley BA Hons MTP MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/17/3173390
23 Falling Lane, Yiewsley UB7 8AA

- 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 Sudera against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 16799/APP/2016/3881, dated 18 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of the dwelling house to 1 x studio, 1 x 1-bed flat and 1x 2-bed flats with associated parking and amenity space, involving a part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension and conversion of roof space to habitable use to include a rear dormer and 1 x front and 1 x side roof lights and installation of a vehicular crossover to the front.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal upon (i) the character and appearance of the area and (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of No 21 Falling Lane in respect of outlook and light.

Reasons

Site and proposal

3. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached house on a corner plot at the junction of Gordon Road with Falling Lane. The house has been extended in the past and includes a side extension with a lean-to roof and a single storey rear extension with parapet walls around its flat roof.
 4. It is proposed to remove the lean-to extension and to erect a two storey side extension in a similar position. Attached to the two storey side extension would be a single storey side extension (including roof lights) which would be positioned in close proximity to the boundary with Gordon Road. The single storey side extension would have a hipped roof and would wrap around the rear of the property. Consequently, the existing rear extension would be removed. A box dormer is proposed for the rear roof slope and there would be a velux roof light within the front roof slope and also the side roof slope of the two storey side extension.
-

5. The extensions and alterations would result in the creation of 1 studio flat, 1 one bedroom flat and 1 two bedroom flat. Two car parking spaces are proposed off Gordon Road and two car parking spaces would be provided in the front garden including a new vehicular dropped crossing.

Character and appearance

6. Falling Lane and Gordon Road are characterised by mainly semi-detached dwellings with projecting double height bay front windows and which have spacious front and rear gardens. Whilst some of the properties have been extended there is nonetheless a prevailing uniformity of space between and around the properties and in the main most of the buildings follow a common building line. These positive attributes add distinctive character to the locality.
7. The appeal site represents a very prominent corner plot. The front and side of the property can be easily viewed from Falling Lane and Gordon Road. The rear of the property is very conspicuous when driving down Gordon Road towards its junction with Falling Lane.
8. I acknowledge that No 25 Gordon Road includes a two storey side extension which has been built in close proximity to the pavement. The Council has confirmed that it has no planning records for this development and hence I do not know the exact circumstances which led to this development being built. Nonetheless, it exists and it means that the building line on one side of Gordon Road has been breached. However, the road bends when driving down Gordon Road towards the junction with Falling Lane and the eye is therefore very much drawn to the common two storey building line relating to the appeal property and Nos 1-9 (and beyond) Gordon Road.
9. I consider that that the two storey side extension would unacceptably break the aforementioned building line. Such development, in conjunction also with the single storey side extension which would be positioned up to the boundary with the pavement, would appear dominant and intrusive in the street-scene and would detract from the sense of open space which exists between the dwellings and the highway on this part of Gordon Road. I do not consider that the existence of the two storey side extension at No 25 Gordon Road sets a precedent for allowing this proposal. Indeed, if the proposal were to be allowed it would have the effect of creating a visual pinch point when driving into Gordon Road. This would be an unacceptable impact detracting from the prevailing sense of open space that exists between the highway and most of the existing properties.
10. The proposal would not accord with guidance in the Council's adopted Hillingdon Design and Access Statement: Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2008) (SPD) which states, at paragraph 4.5, that "*in order to appear subordinate, the width and height of the extension should be considerably less than that of the main house and be between half and two thirds of the original house width depending on the plot size and character of the area*". In this case, the existing house measures about 5.8 metres and the side extension (which also includes a two storey addition) would measure approximately 4.3 metres. I consider that the part two/part single storey side extension would have the effect of unacceptably detracting from the overall balance and symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings and hence the appearance of the street-scene.

11. The appellant states that the single storey side extension would look like the side garage at No 21 Falling Lane. However, the issue relates to the overall width, scale, bulk and position of the combination of the part single and part two storey side extensions. Such development is not comparable with the single storey garage at No 21 Falling Lane.
12. The proposed rear dormer would comply with the SPD in terms of its position within the rear roof slope. Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider its effect upon the host dwelling and the street-scene in conjunction with the other proposed developments. It would be a wide dormer and in this sense it would contribute towards the dominating impact that would be caused by the side extension when viewed from Gordon Road. Furthermore, it would exacerbate the harm caused by the development in respect of unacceptably interrupting the overall balance and symmetry of the pair of semi-detached houses.
13. The single storey side extension would wrap around the rear of the property. Such a rear extension would project about 4.0 metres into the rear garden. There would be conflict with the SPD which states, at paragraph 3.3, that single storey rear extensions should not exceed 3.6 metres deep. The single storey rear extension would exceed the 3.6 metre deep threshold by 0.4 of a metre. However, in this case the proposed extension would be lower in height than the existing single storey extension (and would include a hipped roof) and there would be only a very minor breach of the SPD threshold in terms of its rear projection. In design terms, I do not consider that the single storey rear extension would be harmful and the introduction of a relatively less oppressive roof form would compensate for the slight increase in the depth of such an extension. It is not, however, possible for me to allow this part of the proposal and issue a split decision. This is because the single storey rear extension is physically linked to the proposed side extension.
14. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that when the proposal is considered as a whole significant harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not accord with the design aims of Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies (2012); saved Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP) and the SPD.

Living conditions

15. The Council contend that the single storey rear extension would cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 21 Falling Lane in terms of outlook and light. I acknowledge that the proposal would not accord with the SPD in so far that the rear extension would extend 4.0 metres into the rear garden when the SPD states that such developments should not exceed 3.6 metres. However, when compared to the existing rear extension the proposed roof form would have the effect of reducing the overall scale and bulk of the development. I consider that this compensates for the slight increase in the projection of development when compared to the existing rear extension. In this context, I do not consider that the proposal would result in a material loss of outlook or light for the occupiers of No 21 Falling Lane.
16. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that whilst there would be a technical breach of guidance in the SPD in terms of the projection of the single storey rear extension, in relative terms such development would not lead to a material loss of light or outlook for the occupiers of No 21 Falling Lane.

Therefore, the proposal would accord with the overall amenity aims of saved Policies BE19, BE20 and BE21 of the UDP and the SPD.

Conclusion

17. Whilst I have found that the proposal would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the living conditions of No 21 Falling Lane in respect of levels of light and outlook, very significant harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. This is a matter of overriding concern and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

Daniel Hartley

INSPECTOR