
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by Janet Wilson BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI DMS

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

Decision date: 25th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/17/3168141
80 Alicia Gardens, HARROW HA3 8JE

- 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 and Mrs Shah against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/5263/16, dated 25 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension, single and two storey side to rear extension and single storey rear extension.
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Preliminary Matter

1. I have used the description of the proposal from the Council's decision notice. It adequately and simply describes the proposed development instead of the longer description given on the application form. I saw on my visit that the development has already commenced with some ground floor walls and foundations in place and building work in progress. I shall consider the appeal accordingly.

Decision

2. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey front extension, single and two storey side to rear extension and single storey rear extension at 80 Alicia Gardens, HARROW HA3 8JE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/5263/16, dated 25 October 2016, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be completed only in accordance with the following approved plans: 1213-001-PL, 1213-004-PL, 1213-005-PL, 1213-006-PL.
 - 2) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows/dormer windows, shall be constructed on the flank elevation.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in an area of large semi-detached houses that were no doubt originally built to similar designs. A number of the properties in the vicinity have been extended to the side such that many are linked together (or appear to be linked together) though two storey side extensions are mainly set back from the front elevations such that properties still read as semi-detached.
5. The proposal would mirror the extensions undertaken at the attached property though would differ in respect of the footprint of the structure which incorporates a splay to enable the full width of the site to be used. The appellants advise that this shape avoids the need for an inaccessible wedge of space between the existing neighbour and the proposed extension.
6. The two storey extension would be set back from the front elevation and the single storey element would relate to the garage of the adjacent property and does not form part of the council's objection to the scheme. The two storey element of the development, whilst visible from the front of the property, is set back from the front elevation and the roofline is lower than the ridge of the house. Accordingly, the visual impact of the extension from the street would not be harmed as the property would, in my view, retain visual coherence.
7. The Council state the extension would be visually bulky and disproportionate though I note that particularly from the rear it would create a measure of balance to the pair of properties as the attached house has been extended in a similar manner. The Council relies on design guidance in its Supplementary Planning Document entitled 'Residential Design Guide' 2010 (SPD) which specifies that chamfering of extensions is not normally acceptable. In this case, given the extent of alterations which have been made to properties either side, the space between the built form with a squared extension would be awkward to access and maintain and thus there is a logic to the design approach. Whilst not to the letter of this guidance the forming of the rear extension in this manner would not, in this case, be harmful to the character of the site or the area in general.
8. At the back, the visual impact of the 2 storey extension and the single storey rear extension would be greater in the local sense that it is visible from the garden and the adjacent ones (either side). It would undeniably be large in proportion to the house but would have no material impact on the public realm and would retain a spacious feel given the extent of the private garden. To the rear it would be seen the context of extensions which have been carried out to its "pair" and would not look out of character.
9. I conclude that this proposal would sit acceptably in its visual context, without harming the character and appearance of the host property or the wider area. Accordingly, there is no conflict with those provisions of policies 7.4 B and 7.6 B of London Plan - The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (2016) ; Policy CS1 B of the Harrow Core Strategy and policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Local Plan Policies (LP) or the SPD, which, in combination, require new development to be of a high standard of design, respectful of local architecture and character, and for house extensions to respect their host buildings.

Other matters

10. The appellants have submitted drawings to illustrate how the extension would look with the chamfered shape removed at first floor level. As I have found the submitted plans acceptable it is not necessary to consider these alternatives.

Conditions

11. Given the location of the extension on the boundary the Council's suggested condition relates to restricting openings in the flank elevation in order to protect the amenity of the occupants of the adjacent property.
12. In respect of materials a condition shall be imposed in the interests of the character and appearance of the area and to ensure external finishes match the original property
13. It is also necessary in the interests of certainty that the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans. As the development has already commenced it is not appropriate or necessary to impose a time limit on the decision.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions outlined.

Janet Wilson

INSPECTOR