

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2017

by Mike Worden BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 02 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A5270/W/17/3171979
75 Castle Road, Northolt UB5 4SE

- 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 P Khakharia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing.
 - The application Ref 166647FUL, dated 24 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is part two storey, part single storey side/rear extension and general fenestration alterations and sub-division of existing house with proposed extensions into four self-contained dwellings with associated bins, cycle racks and amenity provision.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to streetscene

Reasons

3. The appeal site is an end of terrace house in a suburban residential area, situated on the corner of Castle Road and Oriel Way. It has existing rear dormer and ground floor extensions.
 4. The proposal is to extend the house onto the area currently occupied by its side garden and convert the property into 4 dwellings. Two of the dwellings are proposed to be studio flats and two would be one bedroom flats. The nature of the proposed extension would be mainly two storey with a projecting two and single storey element at the rear. External amenity for all four properties would be provided to the rear of the extended property.
 5. The proposed development would be a significantly large extension to the existing property. The extension would be stepped down slightly at roof level as a result of the slope of Castle Road.
 6. The bulk and design of the proposed extension would jar with the features of the existing property and would appear discordant in the streetscene. The proposed rear two storey projection incorporates a pitched roof which faces the rear and this is out of keeping with the rear of the existing property which features a dormer extension.
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7. The existing house is in a highly prominent position on the corner plot and the proposed extension would create a development which when viewed from Oriel Way in particular would be one of significant bulk and over dominance. It would also be of a jarring and confusing design giving the impression that it does not respect nor follow the features of the existing house. It would not be subservient but rather dominating. The proposed extension would bring the built form of the property extremely close to the boundary with the pavement of Oriel Way and the gable ended nature of the side elevation would appear very dominant in the streetscene. The slope of Castle Road would exacerbate this impact from Oriel Way close to the Castle Road junction.
8. The relatively long rear gardens of the appeal site and No 1 Gonville Crescent at the rear mean that the proposed extension would be extremely prominent in views along Oriel Way from Gonville Crescent and the bulk and jarring effect of the extension would be highly evident.
9. In views of both the front and rear of the property, the proposed extension would have the effect of narrowing the gap between properties either side of the junction of Oriel Way and Castle Road. This would be the case in views from Gonville Crescent down Oriel Way and in views from the Oriel Way/Castle Road junction looking towards Gonville Crescent. I consider that this impact would be harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscene.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of examples in the vicinity where side extensions have been built close to the pavement on corner plots. I viewed each of these properties from the street.
11. I do not know the circumstances or under what policy context the extension at the property on the corner of Castle Road and Oriel Way directly opposite the appeal site was allowed. When taken with the other side extensions on 2 of the the other properties at the Castle Road/Oriel Way junction, the proposal would significantly narrow the spaciousness of the junction. Should the proposed development be allowed, this would only exacerbate this narrowing around the junction, which I consider would be harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscene.
12. I do not consider that the extensions opposite the appeal site offer a justification for me to come to a different view in this instance. Notwithstanding what has taken place, I consider that the proposed development is harmful both in isolation and in combination with developments already undertaken.
13. I do not consider the examples referred to me at the junctions of Oriel Way with Gonville Crescent and with Carr Road are directly comparable. The side extension at No 127 Gonville Crescent has a pitched roof which reduces its dominance compared to the effect of the appeal proposal. The house at No 1 Gonville Crescent has a single storey side extension.
14. The house on the corner of Oriel Way and Carr Road has been extended to the side, but the effect of dominance and of the closing of the gap across the street corner is less severe given the different layouts of the other properties around that junction which itself is not a crossroads unlike the Castle Road/Oriel Road junction. This means that views of it from Oriel Way are softened to a degree by the houses on Carr Road which face up Oriel Way.

15. Overall for the reasons above I conclude that the proposed development will have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene and would be contrary to Policies 7.4 and 7B of the Council's Development Management Development Plan Document 2013 and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of The London Plan 2016 which together aim to ensure that new developments respect local character and street scene and are of good design. In its decision notice the Council referred to Policy 7A of the DPD but that policy relates to emissions and I have not had regard to it in reaching my decision since I do not consider it to be directly relevant.
16. The proposal would also be contrary to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 4, Residential Extensions and in particular that part of the guidance regarding rear and side extensions. This SPD has been adopted by the Council as interim guidance and I have afforded it moderate weight in arriving at my decision.

Other Matter

17. The Council is satisfied with the internal space to be provided as a result of the extension and conversion, but the officer's report expresses concern that the external amenity space for the first floor flats would not be directly accessible and that it would not be used. The two amenity spaces for the use of the occupiers of the first floor flats would lie behind the two ground floor properties and would be accessed by a passageway alongside the extended house. The occupiers would have to exit via the front door and walk around the side of the building.
18. Given the configuration of the flats within the properties and that they are one bedroomed and studio, non-family, flats, I consider that the two amenity spaces are in an acceptable position. I also consider that access to them, although clearly a lengthier route than those for the ground floor flats, is not unreasonable and the proposal would therefore accord with Policy 7.6c of The London Plan which seeks to protect residential amenity.

Conclusion

19. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide an additional three dwelling units in a street which is served by buses and which is within easy walking distance of a tube station. However, this benefit does not outweigh the significant harm which I consider would result from the proposal.
20. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mike Worden

INSPECTOR