
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2017

by Elaine Worthington BA (Hons) MTP MUED MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/17/3173826

19 & 20 Thorverton Road, Cricklewood, London, NW2 1RE

- 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 Messrs Qureshi and Gallagher against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 17/0572/FUL, dated 1 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part single and part two storey rear extension to No 19 and part single part two storey front/side/rear extension to No 20.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 19 and 20 Thorverton Road and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a pair of semi-detached houses in a residential area of similar properties.
4. At No 19 the proposal includes a single storey rear extension that would be 6 metres deep, 6 metres wide and 3 metres high with a flat roof. It also incorporates a first floor rear extension which would project 2 metres rearward from the rear wall of the house, with a width of 2.7 metres and would adjoin the existing first floor rear projection there.
5. No 20 already has a loft extension, a rear dormer, a rear single storey extension and a large outbuilding that is indicated to be a games room immediately to the rear of the house. At No 20 the proposal includes a single storey rear extension which would project 2.5 metres rearwards of the existing single storey rear extension (a total of 6 metres rearward of the main back wall of the house) and 6 metres in width to adjoin the existing outbuilding. It also incorporates a first floor extension that would project 2 metres rearwards of the back wall and would be 3.3 metres wide. Additionally the proposal includes a single storey side extension that would be some 14.5 metres deep and 2.2 metres wide, and a single storey front extension that would be around 1 metre deep, 5.4 metres wide, and 3.5 metres high.

6. The Barnet Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) states that extensions should normally be subordinate to the original house, respect the original building and should not be overly dominant. It advises that the depth of a single storey rear extension normally considered acceptable for semi-detached properties is 3.5 metres. The rear gardens of both properties are more than 26 metres deep and the appellants consider that the single storey rear additions would result in only a 23% incursion into the rear gardens. Nevertheless, at some 6 metres in depth, they would be well in excess of this guideline.
7. Moreover, the proposal would extend No 20's existing ground floor extension to adjoin the large existing single storey outbuilding and would connect it to the house. Additionally it would infill the existing gap to the side of the house with single storey development right up to the boundary with neighbouring No 21. This extension would also extend forwards of the front of the house and across its front elevation.
8. The appellants argue that due to the close proximity of No 20's outbuilding it is logical to incorporate it into the extension instead of demolishing it and removing the debris (which would be unsustainable and contribute to landfill). I appreciate that the proposed front extension would infill the existing porch canopy and would align with the front projection of No 20's front bay window. Since adjacent No 21 is set forward of No 20 the proposal would be behind the front of No 21 and would generally align with the forward building line of the properties on the west side of Thorverton Road.
9. Nevertheless, in connecting the existing outbuilding to the house the proposal would add significantly to No 20's footprint. Furthermore, the proposed additions would wrap around the rear, side and front of No 20. They would bring development directly on to the boundary with No 21 and would project a good deal forward of the front wall of the house. They would also extend well across No 20's front elevation right up to its existing bay window.
10. Taking all these factors into account, in my view the proposed additions would be unduly large and dominant. They would be out of scale with, and fail to be subservient to, the respective host properties. Additionally the proposed side and front additions at No 20 would overwhelm the appearance of that property and reduce the visual dominance of the existing traditional bay window feature there. They would also appear at odds with the adjoining property at No 19 and unbalance the appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings.
11. Even though it would only be single storey, the side extension would reduce the existing gap between Nos 20 and 21 and bring the two properties very close together. Thus it would contribute to a terracing effect at ground floor level that would be at odds with the more spacious pattern of development nearby. This being so, and given the unduly large scale of the unsympathetic additions, the proposal would stand out as an unwelcome and prominent feature in the street scene that would be out of step with the other properties nearby and detract from the character of the area.
12. I therefore conclude on the main issue that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of 19 and 20 Thorverton Road and the surrounding area. This would be contrary to Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan Development Management Policies Development Plan Document which seeks to protect Barnet's character and amenity and requires (amongst other things) all

development to represent high quality design (a) and development proposals to be based on an understanding of local characteristics and states that proposals should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces, and streets (b).

13. It would conflict with Policy CS1 of the Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) which sets out the Council's place shaping strategy and seeks the highest standards of urban design. It would be at odds with CS Policy CS5 which relates to protecting and enhancing Barnet's character and creating places and buildings of high quality design. This states that developments should (amongst other things) enhance the borough's high quality suburbs and historic areas through the provision of buildings of the highest quality that are sustainable and adaptable.
14. It would also undermine the guidelines in the SPD and the core planning principle of the National Planning Policy Framework to seek to secure high quality design.

Other matters

15. The Council raises no objections to the proposal in terms of its impact on the living conditions of nearby residents. The absence of harm in this regard counts neither for, nor against the proposal.
16. The appellants refer to a fallback position whereby a rear extension 6 metres deep could be erected at each property under permitted development rights. I note that such a prior notification application at No 19 was refused by the Council, but am also aware of the appellants' view that, in light of a recent high court judgement, that refusal was not justified. Be that as it may, in my view any such additions to the houses would not be as substantial as the proposal before me which includes a number of different elements as described. As a result, this matter adds no weight in favour of the appeal scheme.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Worthington

INSPECTOR