



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2017

by R A Exton Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22nd August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/17/3174070

67 Headstone Gardens, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 6PJ

- 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 Sivaguru Subramaniam against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/3878/16, dated 1 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as conversion of dwelling house into 4 self-contained flats, single storey front porch, 2 storey side and rear extension and single storey rear extension; amenity area, parking and cycle and refuse and recyclable storage; external alterations (demolition of existing commercial garage).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the i) character and appearance of the area and ii) the living conditions of future occupiers of flats 2 and 4.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site forms part of a row of dwellings of similar scale and appearance. There are some commercial uses and residential apartments nearby but these are of a larger scale and different character and appearance.
4. The proposed extension would widen the front elevation of the host dwelling to almost fill the width of the plot. It would cover the side elevation and project a further 3 metres into the rear garden. Although the proposed extension would be set back slightly from the front elevation and its roof would be similarly set back and stepped down from the host dwelling it would nevertheless form a bulky addition. This would appear disproportionate to the host dwelling. It would also contrast harshly with the scale and appearance of nearby dwellings and as a result appear out of character.
5. Due to the appeal site's position on the end of a row of dwellings there would be public views of the proposal from Headstone Gardens. The width and depth of the proposal would be apparent looking into the space between the appeal site and the adjacent Arrowhead Parade. This would emphasise the disproportionate nature of the proposal in relation to the host dwelling and

others in the surrounding area and would detract from the appearance of the area.

6. I note the reduced scale of this proposal compared to that considered under appeal Ref APP/M5450/W/16/3155657. However, this does not address the areas, set out above, where I have identified harm. The reduction in depth of the rear projection of the proposed extension by 1m is not significant in the scale of the whole proposal. As a result, it does not significantly reduce the harmful effect on character and appearance. The width of the first floor element of the rear extension is not highly visible, particularly from public viewpoints. Consequently, whilst the reduction in its width slightly reduces the overall scale of the proposal, it does not reduce the harmful effect on character and appearance either.
7. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. In doing so it would conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the adopted London Plan 2016 (the London Plan) which require buildings to be of the highest design and architectural quality. It would also conflict with Policy CS1 of the adopted Harrow Core Strategy 2012 (the Core Strategy) and Policy DM1 of the adopted Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013 (the Local Plan) which seeks to secure a high standard of design which does not harm the character of an area.

Living conditions

8. Although not clearly translated into its reasons for refusal the Council is concerned with the living conditions of future occupiers of flats 2 and 4 only. It considers that in the absence of information to the contrary both these flats are intended to accommodate two people. As such it considers they are unsuitable by virtue of the size and proportions of their accommodation. In their appeal statement the appellants counter that the flats are intended for single person occupation and are of sufficient standard for this.
9. Flats 2 and 4 are intended for single person occupation. As 1 bedroom, 1 bed space units they would exceed the minimum bedroom space requirements of London Plan Policy 3.5. However, I share the Council's concern over the proportions of the living, kitchen and dining areas for both flats. On a practical level the narrowness of a large proportion of these areas, particularly flat 4, would be unsuitable. Taking into account the likely furniture and space requirements of a single occupant it would render these areas inadequate for their intended use and would conflict with other aspects of Policy 3.5 of the London Plan, as well as Policies DM1 and DM26 of the Local Plan. These require housing developments to be of the highest internal quality.
10. I note the appellant's comments on the proposals compliance with nationally prescribed technical housing standards. These however are a guide that must be applied to individual situations. In this situation I have found that the proportions of areas, rather than just their sizes, would provide inadequate living conditions.
11. In the previous appeal on the site the proportions of rooms within the flats that my colleague considered were different. His conclusion on this matter reflected this fact.

Other Matters

12. I note the examples of other extensions in the borough that the appellants have submitted in support of this appeal. Based on the limited information I have on how these developments came about, I can afford them only very limited weight. In any case I have assessed this proposal on its own merits and the other developments referred to do not lead me to a different conclusion.

Conclusion

13. Whilst the proposal is compliant with the development plan in a number of respects, the harm to the character and appearance of the area and living conditions of future occupiers renders it contrary to the development plan as a whole and justifies the refusal of planning permission. The proposal would also conflict with the Framework insofar as it requires development to be of good design and provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers. In light of this and taking all other matters raised into account I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Exton

INSPECTOR