

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2017

by George Arrowsmith BA, MCD, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A5450/D/17/3179204
25 Nelson Road, Stanmore, HA7 4ES

- 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 B Harte against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/0666/17, dated 13 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 8 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension, single storey rear extension, and conversion of loft space into habitable use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are, i) whether the proposal would be detrimental to the appearance of the parent dwelling and the wider street scene and, ii) whether there is a significant risk that it would increase the probability of flooding within the site or elsewhere.

Reasons

3. The appeal property and the nearby semi-detached houses have a distinctive shape. The main body of the houses is two-storey with a hipped roof. The houses also have side extensions which are set back from the main front elevation. Like the main part of the house, the side extensions are two-storey at the rear but reduce to a single storey at the front. The change in height is reflected in long cat-slide roofs on their front elevations. Being arranged in pairs the houses form pleasingly symmetrical buildings. Just to the south west of the appeal site the street's detailed character changes. There are no more cat-slide extensions but the houses are still arranged in matching semi-detached pairs.
4. The Council have produced a supplementary planning document, the Residential Design Guide (the RDG). In relation to extensions, paragraph 6.14 says that roof design is very important because it will determine the overall shape of an extension. Paragraph 6.46 says that the minimum requirement for first floor side extensions to semi-detached houses is that they have a set-back of the first floor front wall by at least one metre behind the adjacent front corner of the front elevation and a subordinate pitched roof. Paragraph 6.70 says that to achieve visual containment within the roofspace a rear roof extension or dormer

must be set in by at least 500mm from a shared boundary with an attached house, 1000mm from a gable end and at least 1000mm from the eaves.

5. The appeal proposal involves increasing the height of the appeal property's side extension to match the height of the main roof ridge, thereby losing the cat-slide roof; constructing a large box-like dormer, which would cover almost the whole of the extended rear roof, and constructing a single storey rear extension. I am satisfied that the change to the front elevation would undermine the symmetry of the pair of houses and harm the street scene as a whole. In addition, the rear dormer would appear incongruous and top heavy and would cause some harm to the visual amenity of neighbouring properties. For these reasons I consider that the proposal is unacceptable and conflicts with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, policy CS1B in the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) and policy DM1 in the Development Management Policies Local Plan (2013). My assessment does not depend on the guidance in the Council's RDG but it is consistent with that guidance.
6. I am aware that some other houses in the street have already been extended or are being extended. Beyond a garage court, but on the same side of the road, Nos 37 and 39 have both been extended in a way that is approximately symmetrical. Opposite these houses No 42 has an unusual extension which has involved replacing the side hip and increasing the height of the cat-slide extension. Between the garage court and the appeal site the cat-slide extension at another house was being extended sideways at the time of my site visit. Taken together, the changes mean that the street does not have a uniform appearance. However, it has not changed to a degree that there is no longer any reason for the Council to exercise design control.
7. I consider that the Council have not demonstrated that the proposal would significantly exacerbate the risk of flooding within the site or elsewhere. However, I do not consider it necessary to pursue this aspect of the refusal in view of my finding that the proposal is unacceptable for other reasons.
8. There appear to be differences between the current appeal proposal and that considered by my colleague in APP/M5450/D/125/3006571 but I consider that the decisions are consistent.

George Arrowsmith

INSPECTOR