
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 September 2017

by Jason Whitfield BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2nd October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3181708

36 Grange Avenue, Twickenham TW2 5TW

- 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 Nick Roberts against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 17/1131/HOT, dated 22 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension, giving storage and second floor shower room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The name in the banner heading above is taken from the appeal form which corrects the misspelling of the appellant's surname on the original application.
3. The Council has made reference to Policies LP1 and LP8 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan Publication Version for Consultation 4 January – 15 February 2017. However, given the early stage of preparation of the plan, I can afford the policies no more than little weight.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are: the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and, the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of 34 Grange Avenue with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal relates to a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling located on Grange Avenue. It forms a pair of semi-detached dwellings with 38 Grange Avenue. Though there are town houses opposite the appeal property and a block of flats nearby, Grange Avenue is a cul-de-sac largely characterised by two-storey 1930's semis with hipped roofs and a consistency in architectural style. The houses generally benefit from good spacing between one another although several have already been extended at first floor level.

6. It is proposed to extend the appeal property to the side at first floor level by around 0.3m in width to meet the existing side addition which sits towards the back. Policy DM DC1 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Development Management Plan 2011 (DMP) states that development must be of a high architectural quality, whilst Policy CP7 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Core Strategy 2009 (CS) states that all new development should recognise distinctive local character.
7. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on House Extensions and External Alterations (2015) states that the overall shape, size and position of side extensions should not dominate the existing house and should harmonise with the original appearance. It advises that this can be done by ensuring the extension is an obvious, subordinate addition through setting the ridge of the extension lower than the main roof and with a set back of a minimum of 1m from the front elevation. It goes on to state that development which would result in the reduction of a space or gap between neighbouring houses is not normally acceptable as it can result in a terracing effect.
8. I note the adjacent property, No 34, has previously been extended to the side at first floor level and is only marginally set in from the shared boundary with the appeal property. However the extension here would be set back around 0.9m from the front elevation. This would be below the minimum guidelines set out in the SPD and, in my view, would not suitably reduce the prominence or bulk of the extension. Furthermore, the roof of the extension would be in line with the main ridge of the house and, as such, it would not appear as a subordinate addition to the property.
9. Moreover, given its size, height, bulk and form, the extension would infill a considerable amount of the gap between the appeal property and No 34. Given the proximity of No 34 to the shared boundary, this would result in a loss of visual separation between the properties and lead to a terracing effect, in stark contrast to the prevailing character of the area. As a result, the extension would appear as an obtrusive and discordant feature within the street scene.
10. The appellant points to the approved extension at No 34 as being an identical first floor extension to that proposed here. However, No 34 has a hipped roof, in contrast to the proposed gable roof of the proposal. Moreover, I have little detail of the circumstances of that case or the policies that applied at the time and, in any event, I have considered this proposal on its own merits.
11. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, in conflict with Policy DM DC1 of the DMP, Policy CP7 of the CS and the guidance set out in the Council's House Extensions and Alterations SPD.

Living Conditions

12. The Council considers that the proposal would appear visually intrusive from the adjacent property, No 34. I was able to see from my site visit that there are two windows in the side elevation of No 34 facing the appeal property. The proposal would extend the property at first floor level closer to the flank wall of No 34. The extension would, therefore, undoubtedly feature strongly in the outlook from those windows.

13. However, one of the windows appears to serve a room which has its main window on the front elevation whilst the other appears to be obscurely glazed and likely therefore to serve a bathroom or another non-habitable room. In any case, the outlook from those windows would currently be unduly compromised by the presence of the flank wall of the appeal property and their proximity to it. Whilst the proposal would result in an increase in built form close to those windows, it would not, in my view, harmfully reduce the existing standard of outlook. As a result, I am satisfied the proposal would not appear visually intrusive within the outlook of No 34.
14. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of 34 Grange Avenue with particular regard to outlook. Consequently, the proposal would accord with Policy DM DC5 of the DMP which states that consideration will be given to protecting neighbouring properties from visual intrusion.

Conclusion

15. Whilst I have found the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of 34 Grange Avenue, I have found the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. That is the prevailing consideration. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jason Whitfield

INSPECTOR