



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2017

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/17/3180114

46 Rusland Park Road, Harrow HA1 1UN

- 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 & Mrs J Moss against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/1835/17, dated 4 April 2017, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is replacement of roof to existing two storey detached dwelling; room-in-roof loft development to provide additional bedroom, study / playroom and bathroom.
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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 host building, and upon the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appellants wish to extend 46 Rusland Park Road to provide additional bedroom and bathroom space for a large and growing family. They seek to do this in the form of roof alterations including a hip-to-gable extension, the additional of a rear-facing dormer window and raising the overall height of the roof.
4. No. 46 is a modestly sized detached two storey dwelling. It stands as part of a short row of three outwardly similar yet subtly different detached dwellings. The prevailing built form of the surrounding area, which is residential in character, is largely of two storey semi-detached dwellings with hipped roofs. I saw there to be the occasional exception to this rule, such as the dwelling opposite and the three storey residential block at the junction of Rusland Park Road and Marlborough Hill, but the three dwellings at Nos. 42 to 46 (even), although detached rather than semi-detached, do not stand out as being at odds with the prevailing form, character and appearance of the surrounding area.
5. Although differing subtly from each other, the three dwellings that make up this short row nonetheless share a degree of consistency between them, a particular feature being the distinctive and pleasingly proportioned hipped roofs. I saw that the rise and fall of these hipped roofs creates a pleasing rhythm along the roofline of the group whilst also maintaining a degree of

spacing about the upper floors of the dwellings which belies the limited space between their opposing flank elevations lower down.

6. The existing north facing flank elevation of the appeal property, with its receding roofline and lower, subservient, rear element that presently forms the side-facing hip, would be replaced by an altogether more bulky and visually cumbersome gable. Furthermore, the resulting gable elevation would be additionally complicated by an awkward double-gable, valley and sloping roof leading to an area of crown roof. Whilst I am satisfied, as were the Council, that the added height and bulk of the gable would not cause harm to the living conditions of occupiers of adjoining properties on Marlborough Hill, the proposed extension would nonetheless result in a top-heavy and unnecessarily bulky addition to the host property. That it would be visible across the open rear garden of the property on the inside of the junction of Marlborough Hill and Rusland Park Road would emphasise its incongruous form and appearance.
7. Although the alterations to the southern side elevation would be less visible within the streetscene, they would in my judgement be no less harmful. The creation of the rear facing dormer would replace the existing hipped roof with a truncated gable elevation on the south facing flank elevation of No. 46. Together with the added height of the overall roof structure and hip-to-gable alterations to the north facing elevation and roofplane, this would fundamentally and, in my judgement, harmfully alter the relationship between the appeal property and its neighbours on both Marlborough Hill and Rusland Park Road.
8. I note that the submitted drawings suggest that the resulting roof would be no higher than that of the neighbouring property at No. 44. That might be so, but the appeal property is set at a slightly lower level than No. 44. The added height and bulk of the gable with its awkwardly truncated form would nonetheless be visible from Rusland Park Road and the sense of unity through similarity shared by Nos. 42 to 46 would be lost. This would be to the detriment of not just the character and appearance of No. 46 and to the group as a whole.
9. Thus, I conclude that the proposed development would result in an awkwardly incongruous form of extension at No. 46 that would fail to respond positively to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and that of the surrounding area. As such, it would fail to achieve the high standard of design sought by Harrow's Development Management Policies (DMP) policy DM1, Core Strategy (CS) policy CS1.B seek and London Plan policies 7.4B and 7.6B. It would also fail to secure the high quality design which the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also seeks as one of its core planning principles.
10. I noted the first floor parapet wall at the host property which, it is argued, has resulted in a contrived detail on the front façade. However, it did not strike me as being particularly harmful or unduly prominent, and I did not find that it detracted from the character or appearance of either the host property, or those around it.
11. My attention has also been drawn to a number of examples of varying forms of roof alteration, loft conversion and dormer window extension within the surrounding area. I accept that there are a mix of house types and styles, with differing approaches to the form and type of extension, in the wider surrounding area. Hip to gable extensions do not appear to be uncommon.

However, whilst I do not have the full details of the cited examples before me, it appears to me from my observations and the photographic submissions, that they exhibit differing relationships with the streetscene and neighbouring dwellings than the appeal property does. They are not, in my judgement, directly comparable to the appeal property and its surroundings. I therefore give these factors only limited weight, and they are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Other Matters

12. I have noted the appellants' reasons for seeking to extend the dwelling and understand that the proposal would also provide an opportunity to improve the dwelling's thermal and energy performance. However, whilst such matters weigh moderately in favour of the proposal, they do not persuade me to find the scheme acceptable, nor are they sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR