
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2017

by Richard S Jones BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/D/17/3181393
3 Henrietta Gardens, Southgate N21 3BF

- 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 Dr A Thanki against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 17/01009/HOU, dated 3 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 26 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is for roof extensions incorporating a front and rear dormer roof extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host terrace and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms part a row of five terrace properties within the Henrietta Gardens gated development. Although there is existing accommodation at roof level, externally this is visually restricted to a roof light and a relatively narrow dormer with a limited projection, which provides access to the terrace above the two storey front projection. This arrangement is essentially repeated at Nos 4 and 5 Henrietta Gardens, to provide a consistent rhythm to this part of the terrace that appears mainly two storeys in character.
4. Whereas the existing dormer has a subservient relationship to the overall roof form, the proposed dormer, although set in on one side, would extend across almost the entire width of the roof, close to the ridge line and down to eaves level, and with a significant projection over the full width and the majority of the depth of the terrace area. I do not therefore consider it would be perceived as an extension to the existing dormer, which would be completely consumed by an unduly large feature which would dominate and overwhelm the front roof plane of the dwelling and would not appear subordinate as suggested.
5. I'm not convinced that there would be an overbearing effect but the appeal proposal would significantly alter the proportions of the existing dwelling, with a much more dominant roof form that would effectively be perceived as a third storey. The proposal would also appear obtrusive and poorly related to the

existing architectural composition of the building and particularly disruptive to the existing attractive rhythm of the terrace. This would not be acceptably mitigated by the proposed finishing materials.

6. I appreciate that the scheme has been designed in conjunction with the neighbouring properties at Nos 4 and 5 to provide the appearance of one dormer with three projections onto the existing roof terraces. However, the combined form would repeat and compound the harm I have described above, thereby creating a significant increase in the scale, massing and bulk of the host terrace which would largely consume the front facing pitched roof form. Therefore, even if I was convinced that a condition could require all of the roof extensions to be implemented concurrently, this would not have the effect of making the development acceptable.
7. I accept that public views of the site are somewhat restricted and that this part of Henrietta Gardens is not main frontage development. However, the harm would be conspicuous in close private views experienced by the occupants of the other dwellings in Henrietta Gardens. Moreover, the development would be seen, set-back from the site access onto Compton Road. Here the existing development is viewed in side elevation and the scale and pitched roof profile contributes to creating an attractive and subservient form of development in this backland type setting. The existing dormer is not prominent in this view. The appeal proposal would largely change the existing profile to essentially create a three storey development with a largely flat roof form, thereby materially diminishing its existing quality in this view.
8. The development is also seen in filtered views from Compton Road, around the area of the bridge, through the trees along the railway embankment. As demonstrated by the photograph provided by the appellant, the screening here would be reduced during the winter time and the harmful effects I have described would become more prominent. The level of screening in views from the bridge on Station Road is more substantial such that the development would remain largely hidden.
9. Due to their positioning and the intervening built form, the front facing dormers would not be visible in public views from Compton Terrace. Moreover, any private views from the rear of the properties on Compton Terrace would be very limited and restricted to those at the southern end. The rear dormers would be visible from these private views but by reason of their scale and massing, the Council consider they would be acceptable. I find no reason to disagree.
10. The appeal site is situated within the Winchmore Hill Green Conservation Area. The appellant's heritage statement makes reference to its special interest features highlighted in the character appraisal for the Conservation Area. These include the retention of the atmosphere of a historic village centre, the concentration of high quality buildings and the abundance of greenery.
11. I recognise that the appellant considers that the Council's view that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the Conservation Area is a matter which is not in dispute. However, I have a statutory duty in respect of designated heritage assets and paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of the same. Given its position along the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area the development would have no material effect on the

main areas of special interest. Nevertheless, given the harm I have found to the host building and the views in which it would be seen, it follows that that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, contrary to the expectations of paragraph 132 of the Framework.

12. In the context of paragraph 134 of the Framework I would categorise the level of harm as less than substantial. In such circumstances the Framework requires the harm to be weighed against any public benefits associated with the development. I have considered those brought to my attention, including the desire to optimise space to meet growing family needs. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
13. I accept that there a number of roof extensions in the area along Hopper Road and Roseneath Avenue. However, I am not aware of the specific details or the planning status of those developments, which in any case would not justify allowing the harm I have identified in the particular circumstances of this case. Moreover, many of those shown in the photographs provided by the appellant are much smaller and more subservient. The examples of the larger box dormers serve to confirm the prominence of such additions and the domineering effect they have on the roof plane of the host buildings.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host terrace and to a lesser but material extent to the surrounding area. This would be contrary to Development Management Document Policies DMD 13 and DMD 37, Core Policy 30 of the Enfield Plan Core Strategy and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan. These policies state, amongst other things, that roof extensions to residential properties will only be permitted if specified criteria are met, including being of appropriate size and location within the roof plane and being in keeping with the character of the property. It follows that I also find conflict with section 7 of the Framework which highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The proposal would also be contrary to Core Policy 31, Policy DMD 44 and London Plan Policy 7.8, which seek, amongst other matters, to preserve and enhance the Borough's heritage assets.
15. Whilst the Council state that the proposal would be contrary to the guidance outlined in the Winchmore Hill Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal, I have not been provided with a copy of this document. Nevertheless, the above stated policy conflict is sufficient to warrant withholding planning permission without further consideration of the Character Appraisal.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons explained, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard S Jones

INSPECTOR