The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2019

by A Thompson BSc BTP MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:30 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/19/3226602
391 Cannon Hill Lane, Raynes Park, London, SW20 9HH

- 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 Ravi Tomar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
- The application Ref 18/P3762, dated 19 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2019.
- The development proposed is part single, part two storey side and rear extension and extension of existing rear dormer.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for part single, part two storey side and rear extension and extension of existing rear dormer at 391 Cannon Hill Lane, Raynes Park, London, SW20 9HH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 18/P3762, dated 19 September 2018, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: A358:P:100; A358:P:101; A358:P:102; A358:P:103; A358:P:104; A358:P:105 A358:P:106; A358:P:107; A358:P:108 Rev A; A358:P:109 Rev A; A358:P:110; A358:P:111; A358:P:112 Rev A; A358:P:113 Rev A; A358:P:114 Rev A; A358:P:115 Rev A; A358:P:116 Rev A.

    3) Access to the flat roof parts of the development hereby permitted, shall be for maintenance or emergency purposes only and shall not be used as a roof garden, terrace, patio or similar amenity area.

    4) No development shall take place until details of particulars and samples of the materials to be used on all external faces of the development hereby permitted, including window frames and doors (notwithstanding any materials specified in the application form and/or the approved drawings), have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. No works which are the subject of this condition shall be carried out until the details are approved, and the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the application form included some superfluous detail. I have amended the description of development set out in the banner heading and my decision above to align with the description in the Council's decision notice. This description was subsequently adopted by the appellant in their appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of 391 Cannon Hill Lane (the host building) and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The host building is a two storey end of terrace property, located on a corner plot at the junction of Cannon Hill Lane and Camborne Road. The property appears to have been previously extended to the front, side and rear at ground floor level, in addition to the provision of a hip-to-gable roof extension with rear dormer at roof level.

5. Many of the nearby properties also appear to have been extended, including a number with roof dormers of similar scale and design to the host building. However, because the host building is an end of terrace building and the dormer has been built immediately off a flank wall close to, and highly visible from, the busy road junction, this existing dormer is a particularly prominent and discordant feature in the streetscene of the surrounding area.

6. The two storey side extension element of the proposals would extend to the boundary of the irregularly shaped plot and as a result would be wider at the rear than the front. The first floor element of the side extension would be flush with the existing front and rear walls of the original building.

7. Given the limited width of the extension compared to the host building, particularly in relation to the more prominent front elevation, I do not consider the side elevation would dominate or otherwise materially harm the character and appearance of the host building. Furthermore, the removal of the existing outer porch structure on the front elevation would better reflect the form of the original building.

8. On the other hand, I do not consider that the use of vertical timber cladding on the ground floor of the front elevation of the building would complement or respect the design and detailing of the original building.

9. The Council has proposed, in the event that the appeal was allowed, the imposition of a pre-commencement condition, requiring the approval of the materials to be used on all external faces of the building, including window frames and doors. Such a pre-commencement condition would allow my concern about the use of timber on the front elevation to be addressed in the context of an agreed approach for the use of materials on the whole development. The applicant has confirmed that they would agree to the imposition of such a condition. Accordingly, I have imposed this pre-commencement condition, which I consider to be necessary and reasonable.

10. The scale of the flank wall immediately adjoining the footpath would increase, however, a change in materials, as proposed, between the ground and first floor, and the setting in of the rear dormer from the flank wall, would soften the visual impact of this elevation on the streetscene and ensure it would not have a dominating or overbearing impact. The proposed side extension would also replace an unsightly array of windows and tile cladding that accentuates the bulk of the dormer, with a simpler elevation that seeks to minimise the visual impact of the dormer.

11. Although the existing dormer would be extended in width, the setting in of the dormer from the flank wall, and the use of different materials on the side wall of the dormer compared to the flank wall of the main building, would better integrate the dormer into the roofscape of the building. It would also reduce its dominance overall on the rear elevation of the building, compared to the existing dormer, when viewed from the rear garden of the host building and Camborne Road.

12. In addition and potentially of wider benefit, given that Cannon Hill Lane is a busier local road than Camborne Road, the current view of the side of the box like dormer that is a prominent and obtrusive feature in the streetscape when travelling west along Cannon Hill Lane, would be replaced largely, if not entirely, by a view of a gable, which would be far more in keeping with the traditional roofscape of the surrounding area.

13. I note that the appellant's appeal statement indicates their preference to clad the rear dormer with slate tiles, rather than, as originally proposed, zinc. While I consider that the use of slates, which match the existing roof tiles, may well be the better design solution in terms of reducing the visual impact of the dormer, this change in position on materials by the appellant, reinforces my view that there should be a planning condition imposed to allow the approach to external materials to be comprehensively reviewed and agreed by the Council, before any work commences.

14. Drawing these considerations together, I find that the proposed extension would respect and complement the original building and therefore not harm the character and appearance of the host building. In addition, the extension would improve the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly the proposals would accord with policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016), policy CS14 of the Merton Core Planning Strategy (2011) and policies DM D2 and DM D3 of Merton Local Plan: Sites and Policies Plan (2014), in so far as these policies aim to ensure that extensions are well designed and respect and complement both the original building and the surrounding area.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be allowed. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty and a condition restricting access and use of flat roofs in order to safeguard the amenity and privacy of occupiers of neighbouring property. I have commented on the need for a pre-commencement condition for materials earlier in this decision.

Anthony Thompson

INSPECTOR