
Appeal Decision

Site visit made 5 August 2019

by Jan Hebblethwaite MA Solicitor (non-practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/19/3230162
76 Birchmead Avenue, Pinner HA5 2BH

- 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 Reeves against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/1350/19, dated 19 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2019
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension, single storey front extension and detached garage (after demolishing existing detached garage).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the two-storey side to rear extension. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey front extension and detached garage. Planning permission is granted for the single storey front extension and detached garage at 76 Birchmead Avenue, Pinner HA5 2BH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/1350/19, dated 19 March 2019 and the plans submitted with it so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and 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: 20190226-01; 20190226-02; 20190226-03; 20190226-04 and 20190226-05
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the front extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Side Extension

3. The appeal property is situated at the end of a cul-de-sac in an estate of similar houses, constructed in the late 1960s, several of which have single storey front extensions. The appeal property is unusual in that the majority of its garden is to the side of the house rather than the rear and the garden is noticeably larger than those of its neighbours. This is the result of the orientation of the house at roughly 90° to its neighbour at 78 Birchmead Avenue.
4. I walked the length of the branch of Birchmead Avenue in which the property is situated and due to the orientation of the property in relation to the other properties at the head of the cul-de-sac, the proposed extensions would not be readily visible until the viewer was close to the property.
5. However, the side extension would substantially increase the width of the house. Although the side extension would be set back from the front at ground floor level, at first floor level the set-back would be much smaller. The side extension would therefore, be an overbearing addition that would cause material harm to the character of the host building.
6. Although I have concluded that the extensions would not be as prominent in the street scene as the Council suggests, I do consider that the size of the two-storey extension is such that it would have a detrimental visual impact on the host building. The bulk of the two-storey extension would appear to close-in the space between 76 and 78 Birchmead Avenue and although the removal of the garage would provide some separation at ground floor level, I consider that to be insufficient to ameliorate the bulky appearance of the side extension.
7. As a result, the proposed side extension would result in material harm to the character and appearance of the area and the host property. It would be in conflict with Policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan 2016, Policy CS1.B of the London Borough of Harrow Core Strategy 2016 and the London Borough of Harrow Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 which seek amongst other things to ensure that development respects local character and is of high quality design.

Front Extension and Garage

8. I have noted that several houses in Birchmead Avenue have extended front porches, including the neighbouring property at No. 78. This extension does not detract from the character of the host building in the same way as the side extension. The SPD sets out design guidelines for front extensions and I consider that the proposed front extension would comply with them as it does not project further forward than the existing front building line.
9. The proposed garage is of an appropriate size in relation to the house and would not cause harm to neighbours in terms of overlooking or visual intrusion.
10. On that basis, the proposed front extension and garage would not result in material harm to the host building or the character of the local area. They would not conflict with Policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan 2016, Policy CS1.B of the London Borough of Harrow Core Strategy 2012 and the London Borough of Harrow Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 which seek amongst other things to ensure that development respects local character and is of high quality design.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has given examples of other properties which have been extended and are considered similar to the proposed development. However, 78 Birchmead Avenue consists of a full width front extension and I consider that to be comparable to the proposed front extension at the appeal property. However, it does not provide a comparator for the two-storey side extension. The same applies to the properties at 60 and 54 Birchmead Avenue. The property at 76 Cuckoo Hill Road has been extended in a similar way to the proposed development. Nevertheless, the relationship between that property and its neighbour is similar in that the properties sit at 90°, but there is more space between them than at the appeal property and the bulk of the proposed extension would be more apparent than at 76 Cuckoo Hill. In addition, the single storey garage extension reduces the appearance of bulk at 76 Cuckoo Hill Road.
12. I have also considered the appellants suggested benefits of the proposed development. Whilst the extensions would update the existing 1960s design and provide living accommodation for a larger family, and I acknowledge the benefits that would result in this respect, they do not outweigh the harm I have identified
13. I acknowledge that the appellant considers that the Council has not engaged with him. However, that does not affect my conclusion on the appeal as there are other mechanisms to deal with such matters.

Conditions

14. I have considered the suggested conditions in accordance with the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard three-year time limitation for commencement, I have imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans in the interests of certainty. A condition is also required with regard to materials in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed insofar as it relates to the two-storey side extension and allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey front extension.

Jan Hebblethwaite

INSPECTOR