



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019

by P Mileham BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/19/3221847

48 Locket Road, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 7NE

- 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 Ms N Patel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/4695/18, dated 23 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 18 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is a rear dormer to create an additional bedroom for the first floor flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development has been amended by the Council following receipt of the application. There is no evidence of this change being agreed. However, I have used the Council's wording as this more accurately describes the nature of the development proposed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect on:
 - the character and appearance of the area, having regard to the design of the proposed dormer; and
 - the living conditions of future occupiers, having regard to the proposed internal floorspace created by the development.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a two-storey semi-detached double bay-fronted property which has been converted into two flats, and it is the first floor flat which is the subject of this appeal. The surrounding properties on Locket Road are comprised of similar pairs of semi-detached properties, whilst those on the adjoining Aberdeen Road are two-storey terraced properties which appear to date from around the same period.

5. The proposed flat roof dormer is of a scale that it would result in the almost complete covering of the rear roof slope of the dwelling leaving only a very minimal distance between both the gable, the eaves and the ridge line. The dormer would also extend all the way to the party wall line with the adjoining property. This would have the effect of eliminating the opportunity to see the dormer being effectively framed by the remaining elements of the original roof slope when viewed from the rear. Due to the pitched roofline to the front of the property above the bay windows, the introduction of a rear dormer of this nature would also fail to preserve the character of the existing building by diminishing the visual reference points of the original rear roof slope.
6. Due to the scale of the proposal in relation to the roof slope, it would not have the appearance of a subservient extension to the property. The dormer would fail to compliment the host property and would result in significant harm to its appearance and result in an incongruous addition to the property.
7. It has been put to me that this appeal should be allowed due to the presence of similar examples in the locality. Whilst I was able to view a similar dormer to the appeal proposal at Stirling Road, I do not have details before me as to the planning decision that facilitated this or the other examples brought to my attention. Each appeal must be considered on its individual merits and as such, that is what I have done in this case.
8. I find that the scale and bulk of the proposal to be harmful to the building itself and to the character and appearance of the area, having regard to the design of the proposed dormer. The proposal would be contrary to Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) which seeks to resist proposals that would harm the character of suburban areas. It would also be contrary to Policy DM1(A) and (B) of the Harrow Development Management Policies Document (2013) which seeks to secure high standards of design and that proposals will have regard to the bulk, scale and height of the location. The proposal would also be contrary to Policy 7.4B of the London Plan (2016) which requires buildings to be of high quality design and that have regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass. The proposal also fails to comply with the guidance set out in the Harrow Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (paragraphs 6.66-6.71) which seeks to ensure that dormers remain subordinate in the roof slope and secure visual containment within the roof slope. The proposal also fails to provide suitable set-in from a shared boundary and insufficient separation distance between the gable, eaves and roof line as set out in the SPD.
9. Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area. Paragraph 130 also expects proposals to take into account local design standards or style guides in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). In light of the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area and the conflict with the SPD, I consider that the proposal also fails to fulfil the requirements of the Framework.

Living conditions

10. The addition of a dormer to create an additional bedroom would add additional floorspace to the property which the appellant has indicated would be of benefit

by increasing the standard of living available. The proposal would create a 3 bedroom dwelling which would be spread over 2 storeys. The Council has indicated that this would result in a residential unit which it calculates to be of approximately 79sqm, which is not disputed by the appellant. However, whilst the additional space may have some benefit to overall floorspace, the London Plan which embeds the Nationally Described Space Standards requires such dwellings to be of a minimum of 84sqm and the appeal proposal therefore falls below the standard.

11. The requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards as set out in Policy 3.5 of the London Plan also require a minimum ceiling height of 2.3m for at least 75% of the gross internal area of the dwelling, as well as the minimum floor area set out above. The converted roof space would have a ceiling height of only 2.2m. The proposed second floor would account for approximately 26sqm (33%) of the habitable floor area available according to the Council's calculations. The effect of this lower ceiling height would be to make the new second floor feel cramped, particularly in comparison with that of the first floor at approximately 2.7m. This would be exacerbated due to the nature of the property which due to its age and design, has much higher ceiling heights than is often found in more modern properties. This cramped feeling would also be particularly experienced when transitioning from between the first floor and the newly created second floor of the flat. This low ceiling height would result in a poor standard of living, and thereby result in harm to the living conditions of future occupiers.
12. As such, the proposal would not comply with either the floorspace or ceiling height requirements required by the London Plan. I find that the proposal would result in unacceptable living conditions for future occupiers having regard to the proposed internal floorspace created by the development. The Harrow Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document does not provide details in relation to living conditions insofar as it does not set out internal space requirements. As such, it is not relevant in relation to this main issue. However, the proposal would be contrary to Policy 3.5(C) of the London Plan (2016), its accompanying space standards and the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2016). It is also contrary to Policies DM1 and DM26 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies Document (2013) which seek to secure the adequacy of internal layouts in relation to the needs of future occupiers and that proposals comply with the London Plan's space standards.

Other Matters

13. Correspondence was received during the initial determination of the application from the occupant of the ground floor flat raising objections to the proposal due to concerns regarding the numbering of the property and the proposal's impact upon their circumstances. However, the resolution of street naming and numbering matters is not a planning consideration.

Conclusion

14. In light of my assessment of the issues raised and the harm I have identified when considered against the Development Plan, for the reasons set out above I dismiss the appeal.

P Mileham

INSPECTOR