
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2019

by Paul Thompson DipTRP MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/D/19/3227980
75 The Ridgway, Sutton SM2 5JU

- 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 Rajeevan Rameth against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - The application Ref DM2019/00178, dated 30 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a double storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's Decision Notice and the appellant's Appeal Form describe the proposal as "erection of a part one, part two-storey rear extension with alterations to existing raised patio". As this more accurately reflects the proposed development I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. The appeal is related to another at the same address¹ for which there is a separate decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on: -
 - the character and appearance of the existing house and the area of special local character; and
 - the living conditions of occupants of 73 and 77 The Ridgway.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. There is some variety in the style and design of houses and their roofs within the residential area which the appeal site is situated. However, as a pair of detached chalet style houses, Nos 75 and 77 have retained their tall steeply pitched roof slopes with overhanging eaves. These are only interrupted to the front and rear by small dormer windows. The front and rear of each property is faced with painted render with projecting brick plinths and corbelled detailing to either side, except in relation to the garages which have a simpler detail.

¹ Ref APP/P5870/D/19/3227974

Taken together these stated features make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Sutton Highfields Area of Special Local Character (the SHASLC), within which the site is located.

6. The proposed extensions to the rear of the property would change the nature of the accommodation from rooms within the roof space to a full height first floor. The extensions would be split between floors, with the second-storey extension set in at the rear and the single-storey extension continuing beyond this. The ridge of the two-storey extension would be set down slightly from the main ridge of the house and the roof would be hipped to the rear.
7. However, the proposed development would occupy the full width of the house and the rear roof slope and extend notably beyond the rear of the property. Whilst there would not be views of the proposed extensions from the street, they would be clearly visible from several neighbouring properties and their gardens.
8. Despite the use of matching brickwork in the construction of the proposed extension, it would contrast with the existing architecture of the house, as described above. This would also add to the overall height and mass of the proposed development, which would appear ungainly and unduly dominant and imposing in relation to the house. I am mindful that Nos 75 and 77 are not listed buildings, nonetheless, the proposed extensions would unbalance the appearance of this pair of handed detached houses and remove the sense of symmetry between the properties.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing house. The proposed development would also neither conserve nor enhance those elements of the existing house, as described above, that contribute to the character and appearance of the SHASLC. Hence, the proposals would not therefore accord with Policies 28 and 30 of the Sutton Local Plan 2016-2031 (2018) (the LP). These policies seek to ensure that new development respects the local context and responds to the local character and heritage assets of an area. Design should be of a high standard, with a scale, massing and height suitable to the setting of a site. Elements that contribute to the character and appearance of Areas of Special Local Character should also be conserved and enhanced. The proposals would therefore also conflict with Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as there would be direct harm to the significance of the SHASLC, which is defined as a non-designated heritage asset.

Living Conditions

10. As I alluded to above, the proposed extensions would appear dominant from neighbouring properties due to their relationship with the existing house. However, the proposals would also be dominant in relation to the adjacent houses, as the extensions would incorporate a substantial area of solid wall close to the side boundaries of 73 and 77 The Ridgway. The resultant development would therefore be oppressive and create an enclosing effect when viewed from within those houses or their gardens. There are fences and some established planting present along the boundaries with those houses but these would not be sufficient to screen the harmful effects of the development and the planting could not be relied upon in perpetuity.

11. I therefore conclude that the development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the living conditions that the occupiers of 73 and 77 The Ridgway would reasonably expect to enjoy. Hence, the proposals would not therefore accord with Policy 29 of the LP. The proposals would also not conform with the guidance within the Council's Design of Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 4, adopted October 2006 (SPD4) to which I have had due regard. The policy and guidance therein seek to ensure that planning permission will only be granted where matters including outlook and a sense of enclosure do not adversely affect occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties. The depth, eaves design, roof types and overall size and height of extensions should therefore be carefully considered and extensions should be sited away from the boundary with neighbouring properties and gardens.

Other matters

12. The appellant has suggested that he can erect a single storey rear extension that would qualify as permitted development². Be that as it may, in my judgement, any such extension would not be as substantial as the proposed development. This would therefore not be sufficient justification to allow the appeal, as I have adjudged the proposed development to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of the occupants of 73 and 77 The Ridgway.
13. I note the appellant's claims that the Council has focused on comments made by third parties and the additional accommodation is required to meet his needs. Nevertheless, taking the proposal on its individual merits, it would harmfully change the character and appearance of the SHASLC and the living conditions of the occupiers of 73 and 77 The Ridgway.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Thompson

INSPECTOR

² Within the limits set by Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).