
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2019

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/19/3232365

80 Ventnor Drive, Whetstone, London N20 8BS

- 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 Vora against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/0838/HSE, dated 11 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as a part single, part two storey side and two storey rear extension with new terrace area. Roof extension with new crown roof, rear dormer window, 2no. rooflights to both side elevations to facilitate a loft conversion. New front porch and first floor front extension and new windows on both side elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Procedural Matter

3. I have taken the description of development in the banner heading above from the planning application form. Several elements of the appeal proposal in fact already have planning permission (Council Reference 17/4340/HSE), although at the time of my site visit this had not been implemented. The ground floor side and rear extensions, the front floor porch and first floor infill above, the first floor side extension, and the crown roof over the existing dwelling and first floor side extension all form part of that permission. The further additions proposed are a larger rear first floor extension, rear dormer, and crown roof. From the evidence before me it is these additional elements which form the basis of the Council's refusal of planning permission, and I have considered the appeal on that basis.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey detached house, brick built with a partly rendered finish, set on a suburban street with a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings. Although there is some variation between the detailing of individual properties along Ventnor Drive, there is also consistency in the

buildings' scale, height and depth. Common features including front projections with curved bay windows and hipped roofs set below the main roof help to create a harmonious, if not uniform, street scene. The plots are generally not much wider than the houses, but back gardens are relatively long and, with the prevalent mature planting, help to create a greener, softer character to the rear.

5. The extension now proposed would be a substantial addition to the property. While it would not project more than 3 m from the existing rear building line, in line with advice set out in the Council's 2016 Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD), it would appear bulky and overbearing. This would be especially apparent from the back gardens and windows of surrounding houses, and this would be exacerbated by the fall in ground levels away from the rear of the appeal property. It could not reasonably be said to comply with the SPD's guidance that rear extensions should be subordinate to the original house and should not be overbearing. From vantage points to the rear, it would appear as a disproportionately large development which would be unsympathetic to the prevailing character of the area. Although the rear extension would not play a major part in the street scene, the increased depth of the host property would be apparent when seen from Ventnor Drive. This would give the host property a discordant look in its setting, which would detract from its appearance and its contribution to the area's character.
6. I therefore consider that the proposed development would conflict with Policy DM01 of the 2012 Barnet Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, and Policy CS5 of the 2012 Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy, as well as advice in the SPD. These policies and guidance together seek to secure high quality development which respects local context, and the scale, mass and appearance of surrounding buildings.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of other cases in the surrounding area where permission has been granted for extensions, including the extant permission for a smaller extension to the appeal property. I do not know the full circumstances which led to these schemes being permitted, but from the information provided and what I was able to see at the time of my site visit I am not persuaded that these examples are comparable in terms of scale and bulk to the proposal in this case. Similarly, the existence of large rear dormers on a number of neighbouring properties does not provide support for the proposed development in this appeal, which is of a much larger scale. In any event, I have assessed the proposal on its own merits and find it to be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Other matters

8. I acknowledge that the proposed development would create additional living space for the appellant and their family. While the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that planning decisions should 'promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses', none of the information before me suggests that the appeal property in either its current form or extended as already permitted represents an inefficient or inappropriate use of land in its suburban setting. Similarly, I appreciate that there were no objections to the principle of a residential extension in this case, and I also

accept the Council's assessment that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to neighbours' living conditions. However, none of these factors is sufficient, either alone or in combination, to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the area which I have identified.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and the appeal should be dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector