



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2019

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/19/3235844
25 Rodgers Close, Elstree WD6 3HN

- 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 C Ying against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
- The application Ref 19/0546/HSE, dated 4 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 May 2019.

The development proposed is construction of first floor rear extension and conversion of loft to habitable room to include raising of the ridge height and insertion of roof lights to side and rear elevations.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description in the banner heading above is taken from the Council's decision notice. This description is entered on the appeal form, and more fully and accurately describes the development illustrated on the submitted plans than the description given initially on the application form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located at the end of Rodgers Close, a cul-de-sac accessed from Elstree Hill South. The designs of the mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings on Rodgers Close and the roads which branch off it vary. The height of the ridges and eaves of neighbouring buildings also differs in response to the land levels which fall generally from Elstree Hill South towards the appeal site. However, the resulting stepping in height of the dwellings provides for a coherent progression along the street. In addition, pitched roof forms and gable ends, albeit of differing orientations, are common and together with the widespread red brick external finishes, this provides a distinct character to the area.
5. The detached dwelling on the appeal site is much deeper than it is wide, with a single storey projection at the rear. A pathway runs between the appeal site and the neighbouring dwelling at 24 Rodgers Close providing access to a garage court, and running behind the site to connect to Sullivan Way. No. 24 is

at a higher land level and is set forward in comparison to the appeal dwelling, while 26 Rodgers Close is at a slightly lower land level and closest to the appeal site it comprises a two-storey element with a roof which is set down from the main dwelling.

6. Although land levels reduce generally towards the appeal site, it is nevertheless in a prominent location, terminating views at the head of Rogers Close. The proposed development would increase the height of the eaves and ridge of the dwelling to be set above the level of those of both adjacent neighbours. This would interrupt the overall progression in height as levels fall generally from No. 24 across the appeal site towards 27 Rodgers Close at the lowest part of the street, and the impact would be particularly pronounced in the case of the eaves which would be set notably higher both neighbours. In addition, the position of the eaves considerably above the first floor fenestration of the appeal property and the increase in the height of the roof would lead the dwelling to appear top-heavy, with a roof form out of proportion to the scale of the dwelling below.
7. The provision of second-floor accommodation would additionally be an extraordinary feature within this area of two-storey dwellings. I acknowledge that this space would be within the extended roof and no windows are proposed facing Rodgers Close. Even so, given the spacing around the dwelling the presence of the second floor would be clearly apparent from the street scene and the adjacent footpath as a result of the rooflights and window within the rear gable. In conjunction with the increased height of the roof, this would cause the dwelling to appear out of place and obtrusive from both Rodgers Close and the footpath.
8. Furthermore, the proposed first floor extension would extend across the width of the dwelling. This would be contrary to guidance within Part E of the Planning and Design Supplementary Planning Document 2006 which indicates that first floor extensions should be no greater than half the width of the main house, and together with the increase to the roof would add significant bulk and mass to the dwelling. I accept that the existing dwelling is relatively narrow and that there are larger dwellings nearby, including at No. 24. However, the extensions would nevertheless be disproportionate against the scale of the appeal property and would be out of keeping with its modest plot causing it to appear cramped and dominant on the site. This would add to its prominence in the street scene and detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. The set back of the appeal property against the front of No. 24 would do little to mitigate the resulting visual impact.
9. I therefore conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policies SP1, SP2 and CS22 of the Core Strategy 2013 and Policy SADM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016. Broadly, these policies seek high quality design that complements local character and which respects, enhances or improves the visual amenity of an area.

Other Matters

10. While it is not clear from the evidence before me whether or not permitted development rights for alterations to the roof of the appeal property have been removed, I have seen no evidence to indicate that any such alterations would

be comparable to the development now proposed. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide additional accommodation for the appellant and would make efficient use of the site of the existing dwelling to do so. I also note that the appeal follows previously refused applications¹ and that the appellant has made changes seeking to compromise. However, these are not factors which outweigh the harm that I have identified would be caused to the character and appearance of the dwelling or area, and the resulting conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

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

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR

¹ Application references 18/0607/HSE and 18/1606/HSE