



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 October 2019

by S J Lee BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/19/3237775

56 & 58 Wetheral Drive, Stanmore HA7 2HL

- 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 Vinay & Anish Raval & Mistry against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/2109/19, dated 15 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is single-storey front extension incorporating front porch across Nos.56 and 58, two-storey side to the rear extension to No 56 and single-storey side to the rear extension to both dwellinghouses. (Demolition of attached garage No 56 and single-storey side extension at No 58).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on (i) the character and appearance of the area and (ii) flooding and drainage.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal takes in two separate neighbouring semi-detached properties. The street predominantly comprises similar inter-war semi-detached dwellings. The significant variety of alterations that have been made to porches, fenestration, side extensions and roof profiles have however combined to alter the original character of the street to a considerable degree. The two appeal dwellings have already been subject to considerable alterations and have very different appearances both to each other and their attached neighbour.
4. The development would include new single storey front and side extensions, incorporating porches for both dwellings. This would replace the existing side extension to No 58 and garage of No 56. The front extension would visibly link the two dwellings, with no gap and a common roof profile crossing the full width of the extension. Gaps between the dwellings to the rear would also be removed by proposed side extensions.
5. It is not unusual for ground floor side extensions and/or garages to abut their neighbours on the street. There are also examples where first floor extensions have significantly reduced gaps between dwellings. These factors already contribute to a 'terracing' effect in some parts of the street. Nevertheless, in

most cases individual dwellings and their alterations exhibit clear differences in architectural styles, heights, building lines, roof profiles, articulation and materials. Even where the gaps at first floor level are narrow it remains clear that the dwellings are not part of a terrace. As a result, the semi-detached character of the street still prevails.

6. Even taking account of the potential for different fenestration and the protrusion of the porch to No 56, the more uniform character of the front extension and the way it 'links' the buildings would be a highly conspicuous and discordant feature. At ground floor level this would effectively create a terrace and result in a clear divergence from the prevailing character of dwellings along the street. Introducing an extension of a more consistent design across two buildings of very different styles would also appear as an uncharacteristic and jarring feature in the street scene. While not all nearby alterations have been sympathetic, this does not justify the introduction of a wholly incongruous feature.
7. The two-storey side extension to No 56 would be set back from the front building line and would be lower than the main ridge height. In this respect, it would appear as a subordinate feature. However, the hipped roof of the extension would clash with the gable roof alterations that have been undertaken. The harmful effect of this would be exacerbated by the awkward way it would join the gable and wrap around the side of the large rear dormer. The mixture of hipped, gable and flat roofs, all of which would be visible from the roadside, would appear jumbled, disjointed and uncoordinated. This would detract significantly from the appearance of the host dwelling.
8. The first-floor rear extension to No 56 would project from the rear building line and leave an inset area above the ground floor extension. This would have a flat roof and would add to the profusion of different and disparate elements to the rear of No 56. Combined with the existing and proposed extensions, this would result in a considerable increase in bulk and a somewhat confusing overall appearance.
9. The development would fill and close the gaps between the dwellings to the rear. Thus, the terracing effect at the front would be replicated. Flat roofed ground floor extensions of different depths and widths appear to be a feature of the rear of properties in the area. Nevertheless, there is nothing to suggest that existing extensions 'join' to create a terrace. While any harmful effect on local character of the street would be diminished by the lack of prominence, this would nevertheless detract from the semi-detached character of the host dwellings and weighs against the development.
10. When considered as a whole, the development would result in a number of uncharacteristic and unsympathetic alterations that would combine to cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwellings and the wider area. Accordingly, there would be conflict with policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan (2016), Policy CS1b of the Harrow Core Strategy (HCS) (2012), Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (HDMP) (2013) and the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2010) which seek, amongst other things, to ensure development has regard to, and does not harm, the character and appearance of the area. There would also be conflict with paragraph 127 of the National

Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which expects development to be sympathetic to local character.

Flood Risk

11. The Council's officer report suggests the site is within surface water Flood Zone 3a in the Harrow Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). A document entitled 'Flood Risk Assessment – Flood Mitigation Measures' (dated 24 May 2019) has been provided which appears to confirm this. The Framework indicates that all development within Flood Zones 2 or 3 should submit a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment. However, the appellants have provided additional evidence with the appeal which appears to indicate the site is in Flood Zone 1.
12. While the evidence on this is somewhat inconclusive, flood risk still appears to be a reasonable concern. Owing to the size of development, there would be no requirement to carry out sequential or exception tests. The evidence suggests any risk is limited to the rear of the properties. The increase in footprint, or loss of permeable surface here would not be significant. The likelihood of the development leading to a material increase in risk of flooding elsewhere is likely to be minimal.
13. The Council made no comment on the appellants' evidence. Nevertheless, considering the scale and nature of development and the risks highlighted, I am satisfied that it adequately addresses issues of flood protection, resilience and safety. Accordingly, there would be no undue risks associated with flooding or conflict with Policy 5.12 of the London Plan, Policy CS1u of the HCS or Policy DM9 of the HDMP which seek, amongst other things, to ensure development does not cause or exacerbate issues relating to flood risk. For the same reason there would be no conflict with paragraph 163 of the Framework.

Other Matters

14. The appellants have drawn my attention to a proposal elsewhere in the borough where a similar side extension was allowed on appeal. I have not been provided with the full details of this case and cannot confirm the two proposals are entirely comparable. Concerns have also been raised over the introduction of reasons for refusal that were not identified with an earlier application. I have however considered the appeal on its own merits based on the evidence before me and my own observations of the site and nearby area. These matters have not therefore had any bearing on my decision.
15. The development would cause no harm to living conditions and would provide some benefits to occupants in terms of additional space. I have also found no harm in relation to flood risk. However, these factors do not outweigh the concerns highlighted above.

Conclusion

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

S J Lee

INSPECTOR