



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2019

by S J Lee BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/19/3237940

11 Hodford Road, Golders Green, London NW11 8NL

- 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 Adam Erusalimsky against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/2637/HSE, dated 8 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a new front porch. Part single, part two storey rear extension. Extension to roof including 1 no rooflight to front roof slope, 1 no side gable window and 1 no rear dormer.
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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) the living conditions of the occupants of 13 Hodford Road, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal relates to a semi-detached dwelling in a suburban residential area. To the rear, the development would have three distinct elements; a single storey ground floor extension that would take up the full width of the building, a first-floor extension which would be inset from the side and a large dormer which would extend almost the full width of the roof slope. The ground and first floor elements would both have pitched roofs with asymmetrical profiles and different eaves heights.
4. The Barnet Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2016) indicates that dormers should normally be subordinate features on the roof and should not occupy more than half the width or half the depth of the roof slope. The development would not comply with this guidance. In my view, the dormer would be an unduly large and dominant feature that would take up much of the roof slope. While a similar sized dormer is evident on the neighbouring property, the details of that development are not before me and thus I do not know the circumstances of its construction. Nevertheless, this does not justify an overly large and unsympathetic feature on No 11 or the further erosion of the character of the semi-detached pair.

5. Furthermore, the impact of the dormer in this case would be exacerbated by its relationship with the proposed first floor extension. The ridge of the roof of this would extend above the eaves of main roof slope and the bottom of the dormer. This would result in an awkward and disjointed visual relationship. The uneven eaves heights and the way the extension would join into the main roof slope would add to the somewhat incongruous nature of the extension.
6. The ground floor extension would project by around 4 metres at the end nearest No 13 and around 4.9 metres nearest to No 9. This exceeds the guidance in the SPD, which expects extensions to semi-detached units to be no greater than 3.5 metres. The appellant has drawn my attention to other developments where extensions of a similar, or larger size, have ostensibly been permitted. The evidence indicates that there is a wide variety of ground floor extensions in the area and while the development would exceed the guidance in the SPD, the depth of the extension would not be wholly out of character with what exists elsewhere.
7. Nevertheless, the ground floor element must be considered in the context of the development as a whole. Overall, the three elements together would dominate the rear elevation and collectively result in disproportionate and unsympathetic additions. Notwithstanding the 'stepped' approach at the ground and first floors, the overall scale and design of the alterations proposed would detract from the original character of the house and would not constitute a good standard of design.
8. I have had regard to the fact that these alterations would be to the rear and would not be seen from publicly accessible locations. Nevertheless, the development would still result in harm to the original character of the dwelling. The large, unsympathetic and incongruous additions at first level and above would also be prominent from private views of neighbouring properties along Hodford Road.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to other developments along Hodford Road, including that at No 49 and No 7. However, these differ from the proposal before me. The development at No 49 does not appear to include a dormer. The development at No 7 shares some similarities, but the host dwelling in that case has a different original roof profile, the first-floor extension is of a different style and the interface between the two elements is different. These are not therefore directly comparable to the proposal before me. These specific examples, and others referred to in the vicinity of the site, have not therefore had a significant bearing on my decision. I have considered the appeal on its own merits, taking account of the evidence before me and my own observations of the area.
10. I find therefore that the development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. Accordingly, there would be conflict with Policy DM01 of the Barnet Local Plan Development Management Policies document (LPDM), Policy CS5 of the Barnet Core Strategy (CS) and the SPD. These seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development is of a high quality design and respects local context.
11. The decision notice also refers to Policy CSNPPF. However, this is a standard policy relating to the National Planning Policy Framework. There is therefore no direct conflict with this policy.

Living conditions

12. The ground floor extension would project by about 4 metres along the common boundary with No 13. This exceeds the SPD's suggested depth of 3.5 metres for semi-detached dwellings and it is likely that the extension would encroach into the rear outlook of No 13 to an extent. There appeared to be a high degree of separation between the patio doors of No 13 and the deep ground floor extension of No 15. The outlook down and across the garden of No 13 would be unlikely to be affected to a significant degree. Moreover, the slope of the roof away from the boundary would help to reduce the impact of the development. It is unlikely therefore that it would create an undue sense of enclosure or confinement, either in the interior space or garden.
13. Therefore, while the outlook from No 13 would be diminished to an extent, I am not persuaded by what is before me that it would have an unacceptable impact on living conditions. I am satisfied that the inset of the first-floor extension is such that it should not have an unacceptable impact on the outlook of No 13.
14. Views from the upper floor of No 11 would already provide the opportunity to see into neighbouring gardens. The development would therefore not have a significant impact on privacy of neighbouring properties. Views from the dormer would be at an increased height, but there would be sufficient separation and screening to ensure privacy in gardens on Llanvanor Road would not be harmed. There is also no substantive evidence to suggest the development would have an unacceptable impact on daylight or sunlight.
15. I therefore find that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupants of No 13. There would be no conflict with LPDM Policy DM01 or CS Policy CS5 which seek, amongst other things, to ensure development does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbours. The ground floor extension would not fully comply with the SPD in relation to its depth. However, I am satisfied that this inconsistency would not lead to material harm in this particular case.

Other Matters

16. The Council raised no concerns over the alterations to the front of the dwelling. I have seen nothing that would lead me to a different conclusion. However, this does not outweigh my concerns over the alterations to the rear.

Conclusion

17. Although I have found no unacceptable harm in relation to living conditions, this does not outweigh my concerns in relation to impact on character and appearance. For this reason, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Lee

INSPECTOR