
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2019

by Andrew Bremford BSc (Hons) MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/19/3238775
89 Glebe Avenue, Ickenham UB10 8PF

- 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 Mrs Roowa Hana against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 74869/APP/2019/1721, dated 17 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of the development as given on the application form is different from that provided on both the appeal form and the Council's decision notice; accordingly, I have used the latter description as it is more precise.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area; and (ii) whether future occupiers would be likely to experience acceptable living conditions in terms of outlook and natural light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling positioned on a prominent corner plot at the junction of Glebe Avenue and Glebe Close. The building is typical of the development in the area, the street-scene of which is generally characterised by mostly evenly spaced pairs of semi-detached properties, some of which have been extended, arranged in discernible building lines and set back from the road behind generous sized front gardens.
5. The Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Extensions (2008) (SPD) states, in paragraph 3.3, that for semi-detached/terraced houses on a plot more than 5 metres wide, as in this case, an extension up to 3.6 metres deep is acceptable.
6. The proposed side/rear extension would be set back approximately 4.65 metres from the front elevation of the property. It would extend approximately

1.2 metres from the side elevation of the existing building to within about 1.0 metre of the boundary along Glebe Close; and extend across the width of the plot to adjoin the boundary with the neighbouring property, 87 Glebe Avenue. Due to its length, which would be about 7.1 metres, it would extend approximately 4.5 metres beyond the rear elevation of the host property. Consequently, relative to the size of the footprint of the existing building, it would be a large extension that would not appear subordinate to the host property and in respect of its depth would fail to comply with guidance contained within the SPD.

7. The side elevations of the host property and 91 Glebe Avenue, located on the opposite side of the road junction, are already set forward of the return building line of the dwellings in Glebe Close. Notwithstanding this and the small side extension to No 91, there is a reasonably balanced and spacious appearance in terms of the connection between the road and the dwellings, which the host property makes a positive contribution towards. Moreover, the somewhat lengthy and overall generously sized rear garden area of the appeal site, bounded by Glebe Close, in combination with the rear garden of the property on the opposite side of the Close, contribute positively to a sense of openness and space at this prominent road junction.
8. The proposed development would be readily visible in local views, especially from Glebe Close. As a result of its close position to the side boundary and its scale, depth and overall size, although it would be single-storey with a flat roof, the proposal would appear cramped and overly intensify the quantum of built form. Furthermore, the development would unbalance the aforementioned connection between the road and dwellings and detract from the otherwise open and spacious character of the area which are distinctive and positive attributes.
9. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would not accord with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies (2012); Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (2007) as incorporated into the Hillingdon Local Plan (2012), and the SPD which, amongst other things, seek to ensure extensions achieve a high quality of design that enhances the local distinctiveness of the area, appear subordinate to the original house and do not protrude out too far from the rear wall of the host property.

Living Conditions

10. The development would include the provision of an additional study room with a window in the side elevation of the proposed extension. The appellant contends that as she requires the space as a study it is not a habitable room. However, the submitted plans indicate that the size of the proposed study room would be comparable to the size of the living room in the existing property and the size of the dining room of the proposed development. Thus, notwithstanding the appellant's intention to use the additional room as a study, I consider it would amount to a habitable room in the context of the size and use of existing and proposed ground floor rooms within the dwelling.
11. Opposite that part of the proposed extension where the additional study room would be located, there is a tall wooden fence along the boundary of the site.

Taking into account that the side elevation of the proposed extension would be within about 1.0 metre of the boundary, the tall wooden fence would have an adverse overbearing effect upon the outlook from the window of the study room. Furthermore, notwithstanding the size of the window and even though it would be easterly facing, the tall wooden fence would obstruct natural light to the study room. Thus, I consider that the development, in regard to the study room, would result in an unduly oppressive living environment for future occupiers in respect of outlook and natural light.

12. I conclude, therefore, that the proposed development would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers in terms of outlook and natural light. Moreover, the obstruction of natural light to the study room would result in the development being more reliant upon artificial means of lighting contrary to the interests of sustainability and improved energy efficiency.
13. Consequently, in this regard, the proposal would not accord with Policies 3.5 and 5.3 of the London Plan (2016); Policies BE19, BE20 and BE21 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (2007) as incorporated into the Hillingdon Local Plan (2012), and the SPD, which collectively set out to ensure proposals avoid harmful effects upon the living conditions of the occupiers of proposed development, ensure adequate natural light reaches habitable rooms and demonstrate high standards of sustainable design to improve the environmental performance of new development.

Other Matters

14. I note that the appellant refers to other similar development in the surrounding area including the single-storey rear extensions at Nos 87 and 91. I have taken these developments into account in terms of any influence on the character and appearance of the area so far as I am able to based on the information before me. I am not aware of the full circumstances which led to these developments being built. In any event, I have determined the appeal proposal on its individual planning merits and the existence of the other developments referred to by the appellant does not alter or outweigh my conclusions on the character and appearance main issue.
15. I acknowledge that the appellant requires additional space for a growing family. However, the need for additional floorspace does not outweigh the identified harm that would be caused as a consequence of my conclusions on the main issues.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Bremford

INSPECTOR