



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2020

by E Symmons BSc (Hons), MSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/19/3238486 20 Randon Close, Harrow HA2 6NW

- 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 and Mrs Driver against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P3140/19, dated 12 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is for conversion from one house to two houses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has submitted amended plans to accompany their appeal. These provide information and amendments regarding a proposed car parking layout and revised cycle parking with addition of canopies, refuse bin positions and bedroom two window layout. Not all of these plans provide sufficient detail upon which to make an informed decision as there are no dimensions included on the parking plan and the revised elevation drawings do not show the impact of the cycle store canopy. As the revisions would affect the external layout of the proposal and the position of a window, I must also consider whether acceptance of revised plans would prejudice the interests of any parties in accordance with the Wheatcroft Principles. As I have no certainty that interested parties have had the opportunity to comment upon these revisions, I have determined this appeal based on the plans which were before the Council and the interested parties at the time of the Council's decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the principle of the proposal is acceptable;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of future occupiers with respect to outlook;
 - whether the proposal provides adequate refuse storage, and
 - whether the proposal provides adequate car and cycle parking.

Reasons

Principle of the proposal

4. The host dwelling is a semi-detached bungalow which sits at the end of a cul de sac. The building which is the subject of this appeal would be extended and converted into a dwelling. It is currently a garage, games room and study and at one point in the past was accessed directly from the adjacent host dwelling. As observed during my site visit the door between the host property and the garage has been removed and access to this building is now gained via a separate access door. Externally, a fence has been erected separating the garden area between the host property and the proposed dwelling.
5. Policy CS1 of the Harrow Council Core Strategy 2012 (Core Strategy), supported by Policy 3.5 of the London Plan¹ 2016 (London Plan) seeks to resist garden development. The Garden Land Development Supplementary Planning Document 2013 (Garden SPD) supports Policy CS1. It defines garden land as including outbuildings situated on gardens and to land which has been physically severed from the donor property. The Garden SPD also specifically precludes new dwellings resulting from conversion of domestic outbuildings.
6. As the proposal is both on garden land and involves conversion of an outbuilding, the principle of converting and enlarging the building to form an independent dwelling is therefore contrary to Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy and Policy 3.5 of the London Plan.

Character and appearance

7. Properties within the immediate area are predominantly semi detached bungalows with relatively large frontages which provide parking. The Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 (Residential SPD) recommends that proposals respect the existing patterns of development and consider the position of proposals on the site.
8. When viewed from the front, the proposal would have the appearance of a garage converted into a habitable room with the garage door replaced by a window. Although this type of development can be seen elsewhere in the street, this development would differ in that it would be an independent dwelling. It would sit behind the prevailing building line with a very narrow constrained frontage. The position of the front door would appear subservient to the host dwelling rather than a main entrance and this would also conflict with the predominant character of the area. Therefore, as an independent dwelling, its position on the plot would have an incongruous layout and spacing which would have a cramped appearance. Additionally, the proposed four metre long rear extension, in combination with the existing extensions present, would comprise a large and disproportionate addition to the host property.
9. Together, the combination of the layout, mass and design of the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and conflict with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies 2013 (DMP) and Policies 3.5, 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan which together and amongst other matters seek that proposals respect the local context, scale and pattern of development.

¹ The Spatial Development Strategy for London. Consolidated with alterations since 2011. March 2016.

Living conditions

10. The proposed layout of the dwelling would have one bedroom to the front, one to the side and a living room/kitchen to the rear. The Residential SPD recommends that all habitable rooms have access to light and outlook. The front bedroom has outlook over the driveway and the rear living room/kitchen, over the garden. However, the smaller bedroom to the side would have only one window and this would be obscure glazed and very close to the boundary fence. This would give no outlook and although a roof light is proposed, it would not resolve the perception of enclosure which would result. The side bedroom would therefore harm the living conditions of future occupiers with respect to outlook. This would conflict with advice contained within the Residential SPD and Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, Policy 3.5 of the London Plan and Policies DM1 and DM26 of the Harrow DMP. Together and amongst other matters these policies seek that proposals ensure adequate layout, light and outlook.

Refuse storage

11. The dwelling proposes storage provision for three refuse bins at the rear of the property which is accessed via a narrow side passage. The Residential SPD advises that refuse storage should be easily accessible and integrated or screened. From observations during my site visit I have no certainty that the combined width and length of this side passageway would allow for unhindered movement of bins on collection day. In all likelihood the rear storage area would not be used, and the bins would remain at the front of the property. In this position they could affect access to the property, conflict with car and cycle parking and affect the character and appearance of the area through the addition of clutter to the streetscape. The lack of adequate refuse storage facilities conflicts with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, Policies DM1 and DM26 of the Core Strategy and Policy 3.5 of the London Plan. Together and amongst other matters these policies require a high standard of design and layout, including space to access and accommodate bins.

Parking

12. The appeal site is within a controlled parking zone operating Monday to Friday from 1000 until 1500 hours. This requires purchase of a permit to allow on-street parking during these times. The drive to the front of the property is currently used as parking for cars. There is one dropped kerb access point which serves both the appeal and the neighbouring property at 13 Randon Close. From my site visit it was apparent that there was no physical delineation of these respective parking areas and representations received confirm that there is a lack of agreement between neighbours regarding this. Insufficient substantive evidence has been provided to determine whether or not it would be possible for an additional car to be accommodated whilst retaining sufficient clearance to allow for car doors to be opened and clear access to be retained for the existing and the proposed dwellings.
13. The proposal includes addition of two cycle parking areas for each dwelling, both of which would be to the front however, neither area would be covered and secure. Additionally, the positioning of the cycle stands for the proposed dwelling would appear to obstruct the front door.

14. Due to the corner position of the driveway, which narrows towards the dwelling there is limited area to accommodate two property frontages including the associated car and cycle parking. My earlier observations regarding the likelihood of refuse bin storage to the front, adds to this concern. I therefore have no certainty that cycles and cars for two dwellings could be adequately accommodated whilst retaining safe and appropriate access to the existing and proposed dwellings. Inadequate provision of cycle and car parking affects the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of neighbouring and future occupiers. The lack of appropriate cycle and car parking therefore conflicts with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, Policies DM1 and DM26 of the DPD and Policy 3.5 of the London Plan. Together and amongst other matters these policies require a high standard of design and layout, including adequate provision for car and cycle parking.

Conclusion

15. In conclusion, although the proposal would add one dwelling to the housing supply, this benefit does not outweigh the harm I have found to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of future occupiers.
16. For the reasons stated above, the appeal is dismissed

E Symmons

INSPECTOR