



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2020

by S J Lee BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/19/3232891
279 Northolt Road, Harrow HA2 8HX

- 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 Suthagar Pathmanathan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/0541/19, dated 4 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of use of rear of ground floor from Residential (Class C3) to Retail (Class A1) (to extend existing retail floorspace); Installation of entrance door to shop front to provide access to first floor flat; Wrap-around dormer at rear and insertion of two rooflights in front roofslope to provide habitable rooms in roofspace (increasing from a 2 bedroom to 3 bedroom flat).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a mid-terrace retail unit, with residential accommodation to the rear and at first floor level. The development would convert the rear of the shop to storage and create habitable rooms in the roof space. To facilitate this, and to provide an independent front access, there would be external alterations to the shop front and the roof, including the introduction of roof lights to the front and a wrap-around dormer to the rear.
4. The Council's concerns are focussed on the rear dormer. This would be a large structure that would effectively wrap around the main rear roof slope and that of the two-storey rear outrigger extension. The setback distance from the eaves would be well below those required by the Harrow Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)(2010). This combined with the relatively small insets from the sides, particularly on the gable of the outrigger, and small gap to the ridges of both roofs, would result in a distinct lack of space around the dormer. As a result, it would not appear as a complementary or subordinate feature, but rather it would dominate both roof slopes to an unacceptable degree.

5. The rear of the shops have been subject to substantial and varied alterations, particularly at ground floor level. However, I saw little evidence of similar alterations having been made to the roofs of the terrace. The wrap around design of the dormer, coupled with its overall scale and bulk would therefore appear as an uncharacteristic and discordant feature at roof level. It would also create an unduly cluttered and cramped appearance, which would detract from the existing character of the host property and the wider terrace.
6. The development would be well screened, with views of both roof slopes together being limited to the service yard and from the dwellings which back on to the site. Glimpsed views of the dormer on the outrigger, which would appear large in its own right, would be achievable from Wargrave Road. Nevertheless, the unduly large, dominant and incongruous nature of the development would still be readily discernible from these locations. The use of materials matching the host building would not provide sufficient mitigation for the harm caused.
7. I therefore find that the development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, there would be conflict with policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan (2016), Policy CS1 of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (2013) and the SPD. These seek, amongst other things, to ensure development is of a high quality of design that has regard to local character.
8. The Council's decision notice refers to Policy 7.8 of the London Plan. This specifically relates to heritage assets and is thus not directly relevant to this appeal. This does not however alter my overall conclusions.

Other Matters

9. The Council raised no concerns over any other aspect of the development. I saw nothing which would lead me to a different conclusion. Nevertheless, a lack of harm in these respects is neutral and weighs neither for nor against the development. As such, this does not outweigh my view that the alterations to the rear roof slopes would result in unacceptable harm.
10. I also note the appellant's comments on the improved facilities for shop staff, the increase in bedrooms provided and the need for accommodation of this type in the local area. However, there is nothing before me which demonstrates that similar benefits could not be achieved with a less harmful form of development. These factors do not therefore outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion

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

S J Lee

INSPECTOR