
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020

by David Murray BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/20/3245320

31 East Towers, Pinner, London, HA5 1TN

- 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 S Chinnaswamy against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref. P/3139/19, dated 14 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear extension, two storey side extension and porch to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed two storey side extension on the character and appearance of the host property and the local area.

Reasons

Background

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey semi-detached house which is situated in a residential street of mainly similar properties. The appeal site is not in a Conservation Area but the rear western boundary of the site adjoins the West Towers Conservation Area.
4. The property has already been extended with a 'hip to gable' roof extension and a dormer in the rear facing roof slope and I note that the Council granted planning permission for various extensions in 2016 under ref. P/1262/16. Moreover, planning permission was granted on appeal in January 2017 under ref. APP/M5450/D/16/3162557 for similar development to that now proposed as an alternative. The appellant highlights the difference with the permitted scheme which is a material consideration. I also note a 'prior approval' granted by the Council in June 2019 under ref. P/2145/19 PRIOR for a single storey rear extension of a depth of 5.285m and a maximum height of 3m. I will therefore concentrate on the two storey side extension proposed.

Effect on character and appearance

5. As a starting point the relevant policies in the London Plan and Development Management Policies Local Plan indicate that to be acceptable new development, as relevant to the appeal proposal, should generally have regard

to the existing grain of development and make a positive contribution to and complement the character and context of the surrounding area. In respect of residential extensions detailed guidance is provided in the Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guide SPD (2008).

6. In the previous appeal scheme the Inspector noted the Design Guide stipulation that where a property had already been extended with a 'hip to gable roof' a further two storey side extension is inappropriate. However, he concluded that the side extension proposed would appear clearly subordinate to the existing house as it would have a hipped roof; was well recessed behind the front elevation; and have a fairly narrow width and only a narrow roof profile. On that basis he concluded that there would be no conflict with the purpose of the SPD in helping to achieve a consistently high standard of design and layout in residential development in Harrow.
7. In that scheme the critical distances were that the front wall of the proposed first floor element would be set back some 1.78m from the wall of the main front elevation of the property and the rear wall set in by about one metre. The corresponding measurements in the current appeal scheme are a set-back of 1m from the front and about 0.3 set-in at the rear. The main result of this difference being that the depth of the first floor addition would increase from 5.95m to about 7.7m.
8. The appellant says that the appeal scheme has been designed to meet the one metre set-back at the first floor which is the minimum requirement set out in the SPD. However, I do not consider that the set back of the front wall and the corresponding gap between the hipped roof on the gable would now result in a 'well recessed profile' as judged by the previous Inspector on the scheme before him. Further the bulk of the extension now proposed would be accentuated by the increased depth of the new building work virtually on the party boundary with No.29. Although the actual differences in the measurements involved are not great, they give rise to a materially different bulk of structure which would not appear visually subordinate to the host dwelling, bearing in mind the scale of additions already undertaken.
9. I have taken account of the appeal decision APP/M5450/18/3194186 as raised by the parties, but in that case the set-back was less than one metre and in any event the Inspector stressed that he assessed the case on its individual merits. I have also taken account of the general nature of other residential extension to properties in the locality as mentioned by the appellant, including first floor level side extensions and 'hip to gable' roof alterations, but it appeared to me that generally the original form of these semi-detached houses prevails.
10. Overall, I conclude that the first floor extension now proposed would have a considerable bulk in the gap to the side of the property and would not be visually subordinate so as to maintain the host property's original character. The proposal would harm rather than make a positive contribution to the character of the area and would appear out of place in the street scene. This would be contrary to the provisions of Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan and policy DM1 of the DMPLP.

Planning balance

11. I have balanced this adverse effect and policy conflict with the benefits of the development, including the additional accommodation within the property that the proposal would bring, but find that these aspects do not outweigh the conclusion I have reached on the main issue. This indicates that planning permission should not be granted for the development.

Conclusion

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

David Murray

INSPECTOR