



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020

by F Cullen BA(Hons) MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/19/3240639

22 Derwent Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4QJ

- 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 M Desai against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/3282/19, dated 16 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'two storey side extension, conversion of garage into habitable room and internal alterations. Please refer to application No: P/4030/14/4690.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council amended the description of the development proposed to 'single and two storey side extension including first floor dormer to front elevation; enlargement of rear dormer; external alterations.' This is also used by the appellants on the householder planning appeal form. I consider this to be a more accurate description of the development proposed and have determined the appeal on this basis.
3. Within the information before me, references have been made to the draft London Plan 2017. Whilst I have had regard to these, their weight in my decision has been limited on account of the stage of preparation of this emerging plan.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located on the western side of Derwent Avenue within an established residential area. No 22 Derwent Avenue (No 22) is a detached bungalow which has been extended into the roofspace creating a double gabled roof with two pitched-roof dormers to the front and a single, wide, flat-roof dormer to the rear. It has a single storey garage and extension to the side. It is set back from the road with a driveway to the front and a generous garden to the rear. It has a painted rendered finish with a tiled roof.

6. The immediately surrounding area is predominantly characterised by relatively modest, detached bungalows, many of which have been extended upwards with double gabled roofs and/or dormer windows to create two storey dwellings. Although there are variations in the design of the dwellings, they possess some unifying features, such as single storey projecting gables with bay windows to the front and similar materials of painted rendered walls and tiled roofs, which give a degree of visual harmony to the street scene. The linear pattern of development, separation of the houses, wide pavements and street trees all combine to give the area a formal but spacious suburban feel and pleasant verdant appearance. These elements contribute to the area's local distinctiveness and sense of place.
7. The proposed development comprises a part single and part two storey side extension with an additional first floor dormer to the front elevation and the enlargement of the existing dormer to the rear.
8. I observed on my site visit that, although a number of properties along the street have been extended and altered, they have retained a degree of separation between them, even if just at first floor level, which allows views through the space between them and contributes to the spaciousness of the area. Furthermore, it was noticeable that, apart from a corner property, the dwellings possessed a maximum of two dormers to the front elevation.
9. I am aware that the proposed side extension would be on the footprint of the existing garage and that it would be of a form, design and materials that would match the existing dwelling. However, it would continue the existing ridge line and the main front building line of the property and extend the already gabled roof. Its height, scale and massing would mean that it would not be sub-ordinate to the host building and would significantly erode the existing spacing and separation at first floor level between No 22 and No 20 Derwent Avenue. This would go some way to creating a terracing effect on the townscape.
10. Moreover, although the proposed additional dormer to the front elevation would respect the design and materials of the existing dormers, its large size and position so close to the gable end of the building would cause it to appear excessive and inharmonious on the roofscape. Cumulatively, when read together, the proposed side extension and additional dormer to the front would have a detrimental impact on the integral character of the host building, would be out of keeping with the defined pattern and characteristics of development within the surrounding area and would appear overly dominant and discordant in the street scene when viewed from Derwent Avenue.
11. With regard to the proposed dormer to the rear of the property, I appreciate that it would be of modest height and depth relative to dormers to the rear of other dwellings within the vicinity. In addition, I note that it would be set down from the ridge, set up from the eaves and set in from the gable ends of the building. However, on balance, I consider that the combination of the proposed side extension and the elongation of the existing dormer, would result in a disproportionate addition to the host building. This would have an adverse effect on the building's modest character and would not respond to the character and appearance of its context.
12. Taking all of the above into account, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host

building and the surrounding area. As such, it would conflict with Policy 7.4B of The London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2011) 2016. It would also fail to comply with Policy CS1B of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012 and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies 2013. It would also conflict with the Harrow Council Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 (SPD).

13. Taken together, and amongst other things, these policies and SPD seek to ensure that extensions and alterations to residential properties are of a high standard of design, respect the host building and respond to the local context. In addition, it would not accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

14. The appellants have drawn my attention to a number of other side extensions and/or alterations to properties within both the immediately surrounding streets and the wider area. The appellants contend that these have been approved by the Council and as such constitute a precedent and contribute to the character of the area.
15. I viewed the properties in the immediately surrounding area when on site and from what I could see from public routes, I consider that the examples which have been highlighted are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal before me with respect to their location in the street scene or the detail of the proposed development. With regard to the examples cited within the wider area¹, these properties are approximately three miles away from the appeal property and, from the evidence submitted, are side extensions to semi-detached, two storey properties of a different character and appearance, and so, are not comparable to the appeal proposal or the context of the appeal site before me. In these respects, none of the examples highlighted justify the proposed development.
16. In any event, I do not know the full details and circumstances of these developments. I have determined the appeal before me on its own planning merits with regard to the specific context of the appeal property and found that it would cause harm.
17. I recognise the appellants' desire to create additional accommodation within their home and to make effective use of the land and under-utilised space. However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have found and justify the proposed development. Therefore, this does not change my conclusion on the main issue.
18. I am aware that the Council raised no issues in relation to any impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent properties, and I have no reason to take a different view. I also note that no objections to the proposed development were received by the Council from the occupiers of adjacent dwellings. However, these are neutral considerations in the balance and do not outweigh the harm that I have found.

¹ Ref P/0954/16 29 Brookshill Avenue, HA3 6RZ; Ref P/1089/16 38 Brookshill Avenue HA3 6RZ; and Ref P/2973/CFU 18 Brookshill Avenue, HA3 6RZ.

Conclusion

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

F Cullen

INSPECTOR