



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2020 by Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu BSc MSc MIEMA
CEnv AssocRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/19/3239293

18 Glenmere Avenue, Mill Hill, London, NW7 2LU

- 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 Hitan Patel against the decision of the Council of London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/3622/HSE, dated 27 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is part two-storey front, side and rear extension, loft conversion with erection of side and rear dormer, part basement at the rear and proposed demolition of the existing south facing ground floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council have found the construction of the single storey extension and first floor rear extension elements of the scheme to be acceptable, with no anticipated harmful effects upon the character and appearance of the host property or street scene. I find no reason to disagree with this assessment.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is therefore, the effect of the proposed the first-floor side extension, loft conversion, side and rear dormer and part basement at the rear upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. No. 18 is a detached two-storey dwelling located on the east side of Glenmere Avenue. The property has previously benefitted from a single storey side and rear extension. The surrounding area is predominately residential and comprises of a mixture of properties which have been extended across all levels. Whilst it is noted that there is no clear and consistent character in terms of design to the buildings on this road, the properties have an established

character in terms of spacing between properties at first floor level and their subordinate hipped roofs with front bay windows. Whilst a number of properties have been extended at first floor level to the side, including No.16, the space between properties at first floor level remains part of the prevailing character of the area. The sense of separation between properties of different styles is an important characteristic in what remains an attractive residential street.

6. Paragraph 14.17 of the London Borough of Barnet Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance (2016) (the 'SPD') identifies recommended good practice in relation to two storey or first floor side extensions. The proposed side extension would extend to create less than a 2-metre gap between its flank wall and that of no. 16 at first floor level, tapering slightly from front to back. This would be at odds with the relatively uniform spacing between the properties on this part of the street and would contribute toward creating a terracing effect.
7. The property would also be extended at first floor level towards number 20 and the result would be a far wider property in relation to the width of the plot. Moreover, the proposed roof alterations would add substantially to the scale of the dwelling. In contrast to the hipped roof of the present dwelling the proposed crown roof would introduce considerable mass and bulk, with a steeper roof pitch and a wide flat roofed section spanning across a considerable proportion of the frontage. The result would be a somewhat top-heavy appearance which would be disproportionate in scale and further diminish the visible gap between the property and neighbouring dwellings. The dormer windows themselves would not be disproportionate to the scale of the proposed roof but would add to the visible mass of the structure when compared to the modest and attractive hipped roof which presently exists.
8. The proposed basement to the rear would increase the scale of the property which, when viewed from the rear garden, would appear as a three storey dwelling, with additional accommodation in the roof space. However, the impact in that regard would not be visible from the street or notable private vantage point, given the depth of rear gardens. As such, I find that the part basement element of the proposal would not be visually prominent and would not detract from the character of the dwelling or the street scene.
9. However, when viewed together, the first floor extensions and roof alterations would not be subordinate in scale to the modest proportions of the original dwelling and would cause harm to the character of the property, contrary to the aims of paragraph 14.9 of the SPD. In addition, the scale of the additions would unacceptably diminish the sense of space between neighbouring dwellings, contributing to a terracing effect that would be harmful to the established rhythm of the street and to the character of the area.
10. The appellant has provided proposed plans in relation to an approved scheme for No. 16 Glenmere Avenue¹. Those plans show a two-storey flank wall running directly along the boundary with the appeal proposal and a proposed crown roof incorporating dormer windows. However, I have only been provided with the approved plans and it is not clear what form the dwelling took before that scheme was approved. In other words, it is not clear if the property already extended up to the shared boundary before that time. Consequently, whilst there are some similarities between the development proposed in the

¹ Application ref 16/6866/HSE

current appeal and the plans approved for the neighbouring property, it is difficult to draw a direct comparison in the absence of a clear understanding of the full circumstances relating to the development at the neighbouring property.

11. In any event, there are differences between the two schemes. The proposal before me would incorporate a steeper roof pitch with broader expanse of flat roof in the central section of the roof. The mass and bulk of the roof would be greater than that approved at No 16 as a result. Moreover, at the point at which the development at No. 16 was approved, a degree of separation existed between the two dwellings at first floor level which was consistent with the prevailing character of the area. That separation would be substantially eroded if the current proposal was approved and erected. I appreciate that the appellant may feel aggrieved that he may be prevented from extending to the side on account of development that has taken place elsewhere but I can only make my recommendation in the context of the circumstances that exist at the time of writing. For the reasons given, the proposal would result in a terracing effect that would harm the established rhythm of the street and be contrary to the prevailing character of the area. Reference to the neighbouring extension does not alter my conclusion on that point.
12. Furthermore, the appellant refers to other property extensions on the street which have been extended up to or close to the respective side boundary. They state that the Council website has little planning history of these extensions but have made more specific reference to nos. 28 and 35 with application references W11493B/08 and WO3766F/08 respectively. Given the application dates, these were approved more than four years prior to the adoption of the SPD and about four years prior to Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document (2012) (the 'CS') and Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document (2012) (the 'DMP'). They may well have been subject to different planning considerations. I am required to assess the appeal against current planning policy and guidance and have found that the scheme would have a visually harmful effect on the residential quality of the street given the extent of the first-floor side extension. The existence of other development is not a strong enough reason to justify further visually harmful development.
13. Consequently, I find that by virtue of its bulk, design and cumulative massing, the proposed loft conversion with erection of side and rear dormer would significantly harm the visual appearance of the host dwelling and is inconsistent with the character of the street. I also find that the extent of the first-floor side extension would as a result of the limited space between its flank wall and that of the neighbouring property, be inconsistent with the surrounding area and cause harm to the character and appearance of the street scene. Accordingly, there would be conflict with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and policies CS1 and CS5 of the CS, policy DM01 of the DMP, policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) and the guidance contained within the SPD which seek amongst other things to ensure that new development is designed to preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets.

Other Matters

14. The appellant contends that the additional floorspace within the property is needed to meet the needs of his extended family. Whilst that may be the case, little information is before me in terms of the precise family arrangements and, in any event, personal circumstances will seldom outweigh more general planning considerations. Moreover, it is not clear whether the accommodation needs could be met by extending the property in a manner that would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, I attach limited weight to those matters which do not outweigh the harm identified in relation to the main issue.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR