
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2020

by K Savage BA MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/19/3241968

114 Victoria Road, New Barnet, Barnet EN4 9PA

- 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 Dan Thurlow against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/3777/HSE, dated 5 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion, involving a hip to gable, a new rear dormer and rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for loft conversion, involving a hip to gable, a new rear dormer and rooflights, at 114 Victoria Road, New Barnet, Barnet EN4 9PA, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 19/3777/HSE, dated 5 July 2019, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 80/02; 80/10; 80/11; 80/12; 80/31; 80/32; 80/50; 80/52; 80/53; 80/54; 80/55; 80/56; 80/57; Site Location Plan.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached property fronting Victoria Road, at its corner with Victoria Avenue, dwellings on which face the side elevation of the appeal building. I saw the area to be genuinely mixed in terms of dwelling types, with detached properties interspersed between semi-detached pairs, short terraces and larger industrial buildings on Victoria Road, with Victoria Avenue composed of a long terrace of two-storey properties.

4. The Council's Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (October 2016) (the RDG) states that consideration will be given whether or not gable end extensions are a characteristic feature of the street and wider area, taking into account factors such as whether the gable would unbalance a pair of semi-detached houses, reduce visual separation between houses or form an overbearing wall facing a street.
5. The appeal property forms a pair with No 112, but the appellant indicates it is a later addition, evidenced by a lack of symmetry between them, the appeal building being wider and the roof not sitting centrally between the two. The proposed hip-to-gable extension would nevertheless create a more imbalanced roof form across the pair when viewed from the front than the existing hipped arrangement.
6. However, whilst I saw hipped roof forms to be a regular feature of the surroundings, many dwellings also have pitched roofs and side gables, and my attention has been drawn to a number of nearby properties which have undergone hip-to-gable replacements. These include Nos 169, 173 and 177 directly opposite the appeal site, each one half of a different semi-detached pair. No 102 was a further example on the adjacent side. Given the different dwelling types along the street, the roof pattern is already varied, and these hip-to-gable extensions appear as contextual parts of that roof pattern in views along the street in either direction. In light of this, the hip-to-gable extension, despite its unbalancing effect on the pair with No 112, would not appear discordant or uncharacteristic of the surrounding pattern of development.
7. The side elevation faces dwellings on Victoria Avenue and would be extended upwards to form the gable end. Though close to these properties, I saw there to be sufficient space and openness to this end of the street that the proposed gable end would not appear overly dominant in scale, whilst the proposed window details would provide some visual relief from an otherwise blank brick wall. For these reasons, I find that the proposed hip-to-gable extension would fit with the characteristics of the street and so would accord with the thrust of the RDG guidance.
8. The RDG advises that dormer roof extensions should normally be subordinate features on the roof and should not occupy more than half the width or depth of the roof slope. I note a smaller rear dormer has separately been granted planning permission¹ on the existing hipped roof slope. However, the Council points out that the proposed dormer relies on the hip-to-gable extension, and that adequate roof slope above the dormer would not be provided. I have found the hip-to-gable extension acceptable, and having regard to the proposed plans, the rear dormer would be modest in size relative to the overall roof slope. Whilst it would be high on the roof slope, it would be partially screened from views on Victoria Avenue by the existing rear extension and it would not appear prominent or incongruous. Therefore, the proposed rear dormer would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area.
9. No objection has been raised by the Council to the proposed front rooflights, of which I saw several examples to other properties. On the evidence before me, I find these elements of the proposal would not be harmful in visual terms.

¹ As part of scheme granted under Council Ref 19/0910/HSE, granted 7 May 2019

10. Overall, therefore, I find that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Policies CS1 or CS5 of the Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2012) or Policy DM01 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (September 2012). Together, these policies seek to create a quality environment that respects local context and distinctive local character, represents high quality design based on understanding of local characteristics. Nor would there be conflict with the similar design-related aims of Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (March 2016) or the guidance of the RDG.
11. No objection was raised by the Council in respect of the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, and no public comments have been received. Having seen the site for myself, I have no reason to reach a different view to the Council in these respects.

Conditions

12. To provide certainty, a condition is required specifying the relevant drawings. It is also necessary to impose a condition requiring external surface materials to match the existing dwelling in order to secure a satisfactory appearance.

Conclusion

13. For the foregoing reasons, I conclude that the proposal accords with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations which indicate a decision should be taken at variance with this. The appeal is therefore allowed.

K. Savage

INSPECTOR