



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2020

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/19/3243359

42 Denton Road, Twickenham TW1 2HQ

- 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 & Mrs Keith Mutimer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 19/2656/HOT, dated 28 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension, loft conversion and rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council altered the description of application 19/2656/HOT to 'Demolition of existing garage and removal of external staircase. Erection of two storey side/rear extension, raising roof ridge and install 2 x rear roof dormers and 4 x rooflights on front roof slope'. This more fully and accurately describes the proposals, and I have therefore considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on (i) the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area, and (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings with particular regard to enclosure, privacy, and whether or not it would be overbearing.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is located in a prominent position at a bend in Denton Road opposite the junction with Cambridge Road. The appeal site has an irregular shape, and the unusual plan form of the dwelling with a partly splayed rear elevation which reduces in depth towards the north differs from the more traditional arrangement of other dwellings along Denton Road. Even so, the dwelling includes striking canted bay windows, decorative mouldings, a recessed entrance and conspicuous chimneys. These features are common across the dwellings along the south and east sides of Denton Road, and their repetition provides for a strong sense of cohesion between the buildings here.
5. The main entrance to the appeal dwelling is to the north west frontage onto Denton Road, although there is also an external staircase to the first floor level

- of the angled part of the rear of the dwelling. The splayed rear elevation of the dwelling runs broadly parallel to the boundary of the site with the side of 40 Denton Road, and provides for separation to this neighbouring building which is conspicuous in views from Cambridge Road. In addition to affording views of mature trees to the side of 46 Denton Road which complement those on street, the resulting gap provides for visual relief balancing the more close-knit built form nearby. These aspects contribute positively to the character and appearance of the street scene and area, and are not disrupted by the existing single storey garage and rear extension on the site to any significant degree.
6. The existing garage, kitchen extension and external staircase to the appeal dwelling would be demolished. However, while some separation would remain, the extensions to the rear of the dwelling would bring two-storey development much closer to the boundary with No 40. This would significantly close the gap between these buildings and obscure views of the backdrop of trees. In addition, the line of the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling would contrast incongruously with the angle of the side elevation of No 40 and the boundary of the appeal site, resulting in an unsympathetic relationship on the site nearer to Denton Road. Together with the loss of openness on the site, this would detract from the character and appearance of the area, and the visibility of the development from Cambridge Road would exacerbate this harm.
 7. The proposal also includes alterations to the roof of the dwelling. As part of these, the height of the ridge closest to the attached neighbour at 46 Denton Road would be increased. However, the ridge of the roof to No 46 is already slightly higher than that of the appeal dwelling. Moreover, bay features to the frontages of the appeal dwelling and No 46 limit wider views of the rooflines of these dwellings together. Given these factors and the small increase in height proposed, I am satisfied that in itself, the proposed increase in the height of the ridge would not be jarring or unduly prominent.
 8. Notwithstanding this, the height of the roof furthest from No 46 would be reduced forming an unusual stepped ridgeline which would be out of keeping with the generally uniform roofline to individual dwellings nearby. The existing roof over the bay feature to the north of the dwelling would also be truncated and would be offset from the ridge of the gable end to the roof it would adjoin. The resulting awkward relationship between the bay and roof above would be a discordant and intrusive feature and would be prominent in the street scene, including in views from Cambridge Road.
 9. In addition, while the Council have raised no objection to the design of the proposed dormers, together with the roof over the extension to the rear of the dwelling these would result in a significant increase in the scale of roof. The overall bulk and massing of the roof would be disproportionate to the host dwelling, and would compound the prominence of the development in the street scene.
 10. I note the appellant has referred to potential to carry out extensions at ground floor level under permitted development rights but I have seen nothing to suggest that such a scheme would be similar to, or worse than, what is currently proposed. As such, this is a matter of negligible weight. Moreover, given the limited scale of the existing external staircase, kitchen extension and garage these do not detract significantly from the appearance of the site or

dwelling and so there removal is not a factor which weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

11. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the proposal would disrupt the relationship of the dwelling on the appeal site with its surroundings and would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy LP1 of the Local Plan 2018 (LP) which broadly seeks development of high architectural and urban design quality which is sympathetic to its context and which maintains and enhances local character. The development would also be contrary the House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2015 which indicates that roof extensions should be in scale with existing structures and that proposals reducing important spaces between houses will normally be unacceptable.

Living Conditions

12. 40 Denton Road is set close to the boundary with the appeal site and contains flats which are served by windows within the side of the building facing the appeal site at ground and first floor levels.
13. The extensions to the rear of the appeal dwelling would be set further from the boundary than the existing garage on the appeal site, but this is of limited size and has a low shallow pitched roof form. In contrast, the proposal would bring two-storey development closer to the windows nearest the front of this neighbouring building, with the significant increase in the overall bulk and mass of the dwelling further exacerbated by the proposed increase in the height of the roof and flat roof dormers. The increase in scale of the appeal dwelling at upper levels in combination with the limited separation to windows towards the front of No 40 would have a significant enclosing effect on the outlook from these windows and would give rise to an overbearing and dominant feature. The resulting harm would not be offset by the removal of the external staircase or boundary hedge given the relatively lightweight form of the external staircase and the lower height of both features.
14. There would also be additional windows to the rear of the appeal dwelling at roof level, first floor windows would be closer to the boundary with No 40 than existing. The development would therefore increase opportunities for direct views towards the clear-glazed windows to the side of No 40. Given the very limited separation between these buildings, I find that the Council's concern within its report on the application that there would be a loss of privacy for occupiers of this building to be well-founded.
15. Turning to consider 44 and 46 Denton Road, these neighbours have fairly small rear gardens. The outlook available from within these gardens is already relatively constrained by the close arrangement of neighbouring buildings along Denton Road and Beaulieu Close, although the space between the appeal dwelling and 40 Denton Road offers an opportunity for a more open outlook across the appeal site towards Cambridge Road.
16. While there would be no change to the depth of the closest part of the appeal dwelling at first floor level and the ground floor extension would be demolished, the proposed extensions would significantly narrow the spacing between the appeal dwelling and the side of No 40 at two-storey level. The alterations at roof level and addition of dormers would also further increase the bulk of the appeal dwelling as seen from these neighbouring gardens. Consequently, the

development would be a dominant feature which would further diminish the already restricted outlook and reduce the amount of daylight to these gardens, with the effect most severely felt within the garden of No 44.

17. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings in terms of a sense of enclosure, loss of privacy and overbearing effect. Accordingly, it would conflict with LP Policy LP8 which includes a requirement that development protects the amenity and living conditions of adjoining and neighbouring properties. For similar reasons, there would be conflict with the House Extensions and External Alterations SPD. I note that the Council did not receive objections to the proposal from occupiers of the flats at No 40, but the harm I have identified would be permanent.

Other Matters

18. I acknowledge the poor condition of the existing dwelling, and that the proposal would offer an improved standard of accommodation and provide for modern standards of living. However, I have no substantive evidence to demonstrate that this could not be achieved in the absence of the proposed development. Accordingly, this is not a factor which I find would outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion

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

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR