

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 January 2020

by Mr D.R McCreery MA BA (Hons) MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A5270/D/19/3240610

1 Windmill Lane, Southall UB2 4ND

- 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 K Gill against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing.
 - The application Ref 192698HH, dated 18 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a side first-floor extension and loft, conversion of the garage into habitable room and addition of 3 dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The appeal site is located within the St Marks and Canal Conservation Area. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area, including the openness of Metropolitan Open Land and the character and appearance of the St Marks and Canal Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a modern detached house of suburban appearance that sits in a central position within a large triangular plot. The site is close to the roundabout where Windmill Lane meets a bridge that crosses the railway and the Grand Union Canal. At the rear and side boundaries there are fields and the railway line with the canal passing beyond. Because of this configuration, the property sits in relative isolation, slightly away from other houses and on higher ground. As a result, the property is given additional prominence in the street scene and area and is open to views from both local highways and paths nearby, including the tow path running alongside the canal.

5. The proposed development would introduce an extension at first floor and roof level on the side that is closest to the boundary with the railway line. The detailed design of the extension would broadly match the existing building. The ground floor footprint of the property would remain largely as existing.
6. The width, depth and height of the proposed development at first floor and roof level would create a substantial addition of a scale that would make it difficult to discern the host property from its extensions. The result would be a bulky addition with proportions that would compromise the appearance of the existing building.
7. It is acknowledged that the property currently has a neutral impact on the surrounding area. Its contribution to the locality is derived from it having a form and appearance that is consistent with the surroundings. The scale of the proposed development would give the building additional prominence in the street scene and when viewed from nearby footpaths, including the canal tow path. From these views, the bulky appearance of the host property and its additions would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
8. While some effort has been made to step down the roof of the extension to distinguish it from the host property, this would not go far enough to break what would be a bulky addition. Nearby trees and other planting, particularly to the side and front of the property, would provide an element of screening. However, there would be seasonal variation to this and, in any event, it would not provide sufficient screening to reduce the impact of additions of this scale.
9. My attention is drawn to other developments in the area, including the Dock Court development. Whilst I have taken these into account, as I do not have detailed evidence on the circumstances of their construction and most do not inform the character of the immediate context of the site, I can give them limited weight. I am also mindful that each proposal must be considered on its own merits.
10. I have noted the guidance contained in the Supplementary Planning Document on residential extensions. Whilst aspects of the development may accord with the guidelines set out, the overall effect of the proposal when set in this specific local context is judged to be harmful. As such, compliance with elements of the guidance has been given limited weight in this decision.
11. The appeal property falls within an area defined as Metropolitan Open Land. The London Plan gives such areas protections that are equivalent to those given in the Green Belt. As discussed above, the proposed development would be of a scale that is harmful to the existing building and the surrounding area and therefore results in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Due to the impact in the views from nearby highways and footpaths, I conclude that the effect on the openness of Metropolitan Open Land would be harmful and that there are no other considerations that would weigh in favour of the development.

12. In relation to conservation areas, I have paid regard to policy on considering potential impacts on heritage assets in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst I find the harm to the significance of the St Marks and Canal Conservation Area would be less than substantial, I do not consider the harm to be outweighed by public benefits such that Paragraph 196 of the Framework would point towards granting planning permission.
13. For the reasons discussed above, I find the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area, including the openness of Metropolitan Open Land and the character and appearance of the St Marks and Canal Conservation Area. Consequently, I find conflict with policies in the Ealing Local Plan, including Policy 1.1 of the Development Strategy Development Plan Document and Policies 7.4, 7B and 7C of the Development Management Development Plan Document. I also find conflict with Policies 7.4, 7.6, 7.8, and 7.17 of the London Plan. Taken together the policies seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design, compatible with its surroundings and protects the historic environment and London's Metropolitan Open Land.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

D. R. McCreery

INSPECTOR