



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2020

by M Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/19/3242400
104/104A Locket Road, Harrow HA3 7NR

- 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 Ajay Pandit against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/3219/19, dated 18 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as "single storey rear extension, double storey side/front extension, 3 no dormers to loft space".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. A number of the reasons for refusal cited within the decision notice relate to the alleged unauthorised use of the ground floor of the appeal building as a residential unit of accommodation. Whilst the appellant contends that the residential unit is lawful and submits Statutory Declarations as well as correspondence in support of this, it is not within the remit of this appeal to determine this matter. I note an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness has been submitted to the Council and this is an appropriate mechanism for addressing this matter. However, I have not been advised of any decision on that application. I am also conscious that the description of development on the planning application form refers specifically only to extensions to the property and dormer windows. There is no reference to the application seeking a change of use. As such, I have dealt with the appeal only on the basis of the development that was applied for and on the basis of the ground floor having a commercial use.

Main Issues

3. In light of the above, the main issue raised in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a two-storey, semi-detached building located at the junction of two roads. The building is L-shaped with an infill element between the two main forms of the building. This infill has an eaves which sits above that of the remainder of the building, resulting in a distinctive and

- defining feature at this corner location. The shape of the building, addressing two roads, responds to its position at the road junction. This results in the building comprising an attractive and important feature of the streetscene.
5. The wider area is generally characterised by semi-detached properties located along the highway, set back generally behind front gardens. This results in a spaciousness within the street. The spaciousness within the area is particularly appreciable at the junction of roads.
 6. The appeal scheme seeks to 'square off' the building, extending the length of the elevations which address both Locket Road and Warham Road. As a consequence of this, the design of the property would be intrinsically altered. Rather than a narrow, hipped-roof element facing Warham Road, a wide gable end would be visible. It would be an extremely visually dominant feature, at what is a prominent location within the street. As a result, the proposed development would appear as a discordant and incongruous feature within the area. The increase in the bulk of the proposal would exaggerate its presence which consequently would erode the sense of spaciousness that is currently experienced within the area.
 7. The extension in the length of the elevation which faces Locket Road would also result in the building appearing as an overly wide addition to the street, that would appear as being at odds with the scale of the nearby properties. Currently, part of the roof of the property is set down below the highest part of the roof, which creates an appropriate transition between the appeal building and dwellings along Warham Road. This would be lost in the proposed scheme and a bulky and dominant roof form would result, further highlighting the scheme as an inharmonious built element within the area.
 8. The form of the building, which I identify is an attractive feature, would be fundamentally altered and its existing character and appearance would be lost. The ornate and appealing appearance of the building would be consumed by a bulky and plain exterior. I note that the building, when squared off, would be similar to that of nearby properties, however given the unique current design of the appeal property and that this would be lost in the proposed scheme, I do not consider that this is sufficient justification for allowing the appeal. This is particularly so given the pronounced position of the appeal building on the junction of two roads.
 9. The scheme also proposes the inclusion of three dormer windows and a single storey rear extension. Whilst dormer windows are not characteristic of the area, I noted that dormer extensions were not absent either. As such, in isolation the dormer windows would not be harmful or alien features within their context. Similarly, rear extensions are not absent from dwellings in the area and the scale of that which is proposed would not be such that it would be a harmful addition in visual terms.
 10. Whilst I find that the dormers and rear extension are in isolation acceptable, this does not outweigh that I find that the side/front extension, together with the associated changes to the roof of the property, would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with policy CS1.B of the Harrow Council Core Strategy (2012) and policy DM1 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies (2013), as well as policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan (2016).

11. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development responds positively to local context and extensions respect the host building, that developments are not detrimental to local character or appearance, that buildings provide high quality design with regard to scale, proportion and mass, and that development complements local architectural character. The proposal would also conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

12. I note that the appellant asserts that the extensions would improve the quality of the accommodation within the building, including preventing damp ingress and would deliver necessary repairs. As I note above, I have considered the proposal only on the basis of the development that was applied for. Whilst I note that there may be improvements to the accommodation provided, I have not been presented with evidence showing that the scheme proposed is the only way of providing such benefits. In any event, the benefits that may accrue would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
13. There has been some reference to the conduct of the Council, including that an enforcement investigation has been begun. These are matters that are unrelated to the planning merits of the scheme and as such they have had little influence on my decision.

Conclusion

14. Whilst I find that the proposed dormers and rear extension would not be harmful, this does not outweigh that the other extensions would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the area.
15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR