The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/19/3242790
259 High Street, Hounslow, TW3 1EA

- 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 S Pervez against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- The application Ref 00610/259/P11, dated 21 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2019.
- The development proposed is erection of a part first and second floor rear extension and hip to gable with rear roof extension to allow for the creation of two self-contained flats.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of a part first and second floor rear extension and hip to gable with rear roof extension to allow for the creation of two self-contained flats at 259 High Street, Hounslow, TW3 1EA, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 00610/259/P11, dated 21 August 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the banner above I have used the more concise description of the development from the refusal notice rather than that on the original planning application form.

Application for Costs

3. An application for costs was made by Mr S Pervez against the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

   - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and area;
   - Whether the proposal would provide adequate living conditions for future occupants.

Reasons

5. The property has an extant permission[1] for erection of a first and second floor rear extension to two one-bedroom flats. The key difference in the new scheme is that the roof would be changed from a hipped to pitched form and a box dormer added to create living space in the attic.

6. The appellant states the extant permission 'will certainly be completed should this appeal not be allowed'. There is therefore a greater than theoretical possibility that the approved development will take place if this appeal were to be dismissed and I have had regard to this fallback position in reaching my decision.

Character and Appearance

7. The site is a three-storey building located on the pedestrianised zone of Hounslow High Street. The surrounding streetscape has evolved over a long period of time and a wide variety of architectural styles, finishing materials and roof types are on display. The host building is on the end of a short, terraced row with shops on the ground floor and domestic use above, the latter being accessed via a gated alleyway from the street. From the front, the upper two storeys of the row are well proportioned and symmetrical by design. A low hipped roof is largely hidden behind a square parapet to the front. The opposite end of the row abuts a higher building, which forms an entrance to the Treaty Centre shopping mall. The small space at the rear of the row is tightly contained on all sides by higher buildings and overshadowed by the blank brick and cladded walls of several storeys high belonging to the shopping mall.

8. The new proposal is for a two-storey rear extension on the first floor, which would be approximately one metre wider that the existing permission. The increase in width compared with the extant permission would have a negligible effect on the character and appearance of the area.

9. In addition, the scheme would create a full width dormer box to the rear of the property and change the roof profile from a hip to gable end. The change to a gable end would be visible from the High Street and would add bulk to the appearance of the building. However, the fact that the roof is stepped back behind a parapet would reduce the impact, as would the retention of a pitched angle to the front. This means that the changes to the roof would only be visible from a narrow vantage point on the High Street and would be, in the main, screened from the wider public domain. Any view of the changed roofscape would be in the context of a wide range of roof types and heights along the street and the dominance of the row by more modern development. In addition, at the point on the street from which the roof can be viewed, the adjacent building has a steep pitch towards the street, and in reflecting this shape, the proposed gable end would appear less obtrusively out of character. The change from a hipped to gable ended roof structure would therefore not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area when viewed from the High Street.

10. The symmetry of the terraced row would be significantly disturbed when viewed from the rear. However, as the other end abuts the wall of a higher building the character of the hipped roof is largely lost and, given the lack of

[1] Reference 00610/259/P10 (April 2013)

space at the rear it is difficult to view the terraced row as a coherent whole, which further reduces the impact of loss of symmetry. The proposed change to the roof would be a bulky addition, but few people would be able to see this given the enclosed and private nature of the rear space. In this unusual context, I do not consider the effect of the loss of symmetry to be harmful to character and appearance.

11. In being designed to be full width and in placement of windows, the dormer reflects the proportions of the building below. The addition of a box dormer would certainly interrupt the prevailing roof line and would dominate the remaining roof. However, when the lack of visibility from the public domain, reduced importance of symmetry and domination of the space by higher, mixed roof types are taken into account, I do not consider the addition of a full width box dormer to be harmful.

12. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would not conflict with Policies CC1 and CC2 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (adopted 2015).

Living Conditions

13. Policy SC5 of the Local Plan directs that the Nationally Described Space Standard, March 2015 (NDSS) must be applied to all new housing development and conversions. These require that ceiling height be a minimum of 2.3 m high for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area (GIA), which this proposal achieves. The proposal is therefore in line with Policy SC5 of the Local Plan.

14. However, Policy 3.5 of the London Plan (2016) strongly encourages a higher standard in respect of floor to ceiling heights of 2.5m for at least 75% of the GIA. At less than 70% the proposals fall short of this. However, on the basis that the proposals meet the requirements of the Local Plan and are not substantially below the recommendation in the London Plan, I am satisfied that there would not be harm to the living conditions of future occupants.

15. The lower outdoor terrace would be below windows of the upper flat and the external staircase and some overlooking is inevitable, although the area beyond the staircase would offer a degree of privacy. I appreciate the Council's concerns about overlooking of the outdoor terrace area for the first floor flat. Whilst not ideal, some degree of overlooking is inevitable in an urbanised environment and the proposals are not out of keeping with the typical character of private amenity space in the immediate area. Given these specific circumstances, I am satisfied that sufficient private space is available to the occupants of the upper flat and on this basis, I do not find conflict with Policy SC5.

Conditions

16. The Council requests that 4 conditions be imposed. In addition to the statutory time limit (1), (2) and (3) provide certainty by specifying relevant plans and securing materials. Condition (4) is necessary to support sustainable transport objectives.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

2) 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.

3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the application form and accompanying plans E09, E08, E07, E06, E05, E04, E03, E02, E01, P09, P08, P07, P06, P05, P04, P03, P02 and P01.

4) Before the development hereby permitted is first occupied or brought into use, the Local Planning Authority shall be informed of the agreed naming and numbering of the proposed dwellings so that arrangements can be put in place to ensure that, with the exception of a person eligible for a disabled person's badge issued pursuant to section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (or similar legislation), no resident of the development shall obtain a resident's parking permit. Any occupiers of the approved development shall surrender any such permit wrongly issued or held.