
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2020

by Rory MacLeod BA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/20/3249280
Fairways, 28 Pine Grove, London N20 8LB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D McCarthy against the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/6521/HSE, is dated 6 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is part single, part two storey side and rear extensions following demolition of the existing garage; alterations and extension to roof including rear dormer window and roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for part single, part two storey side and rear extensions following demolition of the existing garage; alterations and extension to roof including a rear dormer window and roof lights at Fairways, 28 Pine Grove, London N20 8LB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/6521/HSE, dated 6 December 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Procedural matter

2. The description of development is taken from the appeal form to reflect updated plans submitted during processing of the application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing building, the street scene and the Totteridge Conservation Area in relation to its size, siting and design.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a large detached house on the north-eastern side of the road in a substantial plot. Pine Grove is characterised by detached houses fronting the road and set back to provide large front gardens. The width and size of the plot for Fairways are broadly comparable to others in Pine Grove. There is considerable variation in the detailed design, size and materials of the houses and several have been enlarged by extensions and roof alterations.
5. The Totteridge Conservation Area (TCA) is extensive and covers several residential areas. The Totteridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal (adopted 2008) locates the site within Character Area 4; this is described as

roads set behind the main highway comprising inter-war and post-war suburban culs-de-sac. Here the key characteristics are large detached houses in deep, narrow plots with a regular pattern and frontages that are well landscaped with open or low walls. The significance of the TCA lies in the quality of the houses and their diversity of detail set within a regular rhythm of buildings in the street scene. The Appraisal also lists as a negative feature that some properties have been extended in an unsympathetic manner reducing the spaces between neighbouring houses.

6. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires in respect of any land in a conservation area that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Barnet Core Strategy (2012) (CS) reflect this in their aims to protect and enhance the Borough's historic suburban environment and in requiring high quality design for all developments. Policies DM01 and DM06 of the Barnet Development Management Policies DPD (2012) (DMP) similarly seek proposals to be based on an understanding of local characteristics and for heritage assets to be protected in line with their significance. The Residential Design Guide SPD (2016) sets out detailed advice on a range of design related matters.
7. The proposal would accord with guidance in the SPD in several respects. The two storey side extension to the north-western side would be no greater than half the width of the main dwelling, it would be set back over 1m from the main front elevation at first floor level and its roof would be set below the main ridgeline by over 0.5m with a pitch to match that of the existing house. The Council and some residents remain concerned at the massing of the extension, the infilling of a gap and that the roof line of the adjacent house at no.27 would be lower than that of the extension. However, there would remain about 2m between the flank walls at first floor level. The extension would be no closer to the common boundary than the flank wall at no.27. Similar separation distances can be seen on other dwellings in the road; there is not a uniform distance between dwellings. The combination of such spacing with a step down in levels is commonplace in the road due to changes in land levels. The side extension's design and materials to be used in its construction would be sympathetic to the existing house. Its massing would not be overly dominant or obtrusive in the street scene.
8. The two storey rear extension would project beyond the rear wall of no.29 but would be over 2m from the boundary to this side; it would not exceed 3m in depth, and so would respect guidance in the SPD. In relation to the side boundary with no.27, the rear extension would be deeper and closer, but as it would align with the rear wall at no.27 it would not appear unduly large.
9. The proposed roof dormer to the rear would not occupy more than half the width or height of the roof slope and would replace a similar sized dormer window on the property. The roof alterations would include a crown roof, but other houses in the road also include this feature; the overall size of the resultant dwelling would not be over dominant in the site's context. The size of the various additions would not be disproportionate to the existing house or to nearby houses in Pine Grove.
10. The balcony at first floor level at the rear would not project from the house but be flush with the rear wall and so would not therefore require a privacy screen.

11. The size and positioning of windows in the rear elevation and material used for the walls would be sympathetic to the design of the existing house. They would not mirror the design to the front elevation, but this does not appear to be an express policy requirement. The enlarged house would have a cohesive design respectful of the existing dwelling in its detailing and respectful of the rhythm of building blocks and spaces between them in the street scene.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would be satisfactory in relation to its size, siting and design and would be in accordance with adopted development plan policies and the SPD. It would be in line with the significance of the TCA, preserve its character and appearance and would satisfy the requirements of the special duty set out in paragraph 6 above. For the reasons given and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed subject to conditions.
13. In addition to the standard 3 year commencement condition, I have included a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty and to enable the approval of minor material amendments should this be expedient. To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development conditions are needed to ensure external materials match the existing dwelling and to ensure that trees on site can be protected during building works given the scale of the project. However, I do not consider the Council's suggested landscape condition to be necessary. This is an established house already in a landscaped setting; moreover, I note that permission has been granted for alterations to the front driveway.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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: 19-11 S02B Proposed site plan, 19-11 S03B Proposed site plan (coloured), 19-11 E02B Proposed elevations, 19-11 E03B Proposed comparison elevations, 19-11 P02B Proposed floor plans, 19-11 P03B Proposed roof plan and 19-11 X02B Proposed street scene.
- 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in materials to match the existing building.
- 4) No site clearance, preparatory work or development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of the retained trees (the tree protection plan) and the appropriate working methods (the arboricultural method statement) in accordance with paragraphs 5.5 and 6.1 of British Standard BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (or in an equivalent British Standard if replaced) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme for the protection of the retained trees shall be carried out as approved.