
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2020

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/20/3246670
43, Legrace Avenue, Hounslow TW4 7RT

- 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 Mohammed Saleem against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00689/43/P4, dated 25 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a first floor side extension at 43, Legrace Avenue, Hounslow TW4 7RT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 00689/43/P4, dated 25 November 2019, subject to the following 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: drawings AH731 Nos 01 to 03 (inclusive) and the site location plan received by the Council on 2 December 2019.
 3. 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed first floor side extension on the character and appearance of the street scene, with particular regard to scale and siting.

Reasons

3. The prevailing characteristics of Legrace Avenue are the semi-detached properties with front and rear gardens, set out to create a typically suburban residential street pattern, complete with grassed highway verges. These characteristics contribute to a sense of space within the street scene.

4. The extension of this semi-detached dwelling above its existing garage would result in the appeal proposal's proportions being consistent with those encouraged in the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document: A Guide for Householders (adopted 20th December 2017). The proposed step in the ridge line and the step-back to the first floor front elevation would be consistent with this guidance. Collectively, I find that these credentials and the retention of a roof canopy over the existing garage door opening would successfully break up the scale of the appeal proposal, convey subservience to its host and so avoid any visual dominance within the street scene.
5. Furthermore, I find that the overall design and materials of the appeal proposal accord with the appearance of the host dwelling. The use of both rendering and brickwork would create some variance and visual relief, thus lessening the visual presence of the proposal within the street.
6. Therefore, in terms of scale, although located within a corner plot that is visible from public vantage points along both Legrace Avenue and Lela Avenue, the appeal proposal would not represent an excessively large, disproportionately scaled or unduly dominant feature within the street scene.
7. In terms of siting, the positioning of the appeal proposal relative to the front elevation of the host dwelling and properties on Legrace Avenue would be in-keeping. Alike the existing garage, the appeal proposal would straddle beyond the prevailing line of building frontages located along Lela Avenue. However, being situated to one end of that street at the junction with Legrace Avenue, the appeal proposal would not interrupt that pattern of development to an extent that would be visually intrusive. Furthermore, the appeal proposal would be read against the backdrop of Nos 46, 48 and 50 Legrace Avenue when viewed from Lela Avenue and this would also assist the appeal proposal to assimilate with its context.
8. The appeal proposal, by virtue of its siting, would be visible when travelling in either direction along Legrace Avenue and also when approaching that street from Lela Avenue. However, it would be read in conjunction with the already similarly extended neighbouring property, No 45 Legrace Avenue. Indeed visually, by virtue of its scale, form and siting, the appeal proposal would improve the balance and symmetry of these two properties which sit immediately on either side of the junction with Lela Avenue.
9. It is noted that the positioning of the appeal proposal, insofar as it would adjoin the adjacent public footpath, would not accord with the requirement of a one metre set-back contained within the Council's residential design supplementary guidance. This would result in the reduction of the existing visual gap at first floor level between the appeal property and No 45. However, the intervening public highway affords a substantial visual separation between these two neighbouring properties. Furthermore, the associated grassed highway verges soften and give visual relief to the hard surfaces that constitute the surrounding highways and buildings and that effect would extend to the appeal proposal. Therefore, I do not find that the modest narrowing of this substantial visual gap at first floor level would result in such a change as to cause a visually dominant or obtrusive feature within the street scene.
10. I note that the Council's supplementary design guidance acknowledges that there will inevitably be instances where decisions deviate from that guidance.

Notwithstanding the apparent limited conflict with this guidance, for the reasons given I do not find that this particular proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene, with particular regard to scale and siting.

11. Policy CC1 of the 'London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030: Volume One' seeks to secure developments that sensitively and creatively respond to an area's character and indicates that poor quality design will be refused. Policy CC2, amongst other things, expects development proposals to function well in themselves and in their effect on surrounding areas. This policy expects proposals to respond meaningfully and sensitively to the site, its characteristics and constraints, and to the layout, grain, massing and height of surrounding buildings. It also expects careful consideration of external appearance, composition and arrangement.
12. Furthermore, Policy SC7 expects that extensions do not harm the existing character and appearance of the building and its context by ensuring a development has regard to relevant supplementary guidance. Proposals are expected to complement the original building, harmonise with adjoining properties and maintain the character of the general street scene. Regard is to be had to the quality, character, materials and scale of the principal building and, proposals be subordinate to the existing building.
13. In the absence of any harm, I find that there is no conflict with Policy CC1, Policy CC2, Policy SC7 or the wider development plan.

Other Matter

14. I have noted the reference to the planning history of the appeal site which has been advanced. However, as the proposal before me differs materially in its design and I have found that it does not present any harm, that matter does not outweigh my findings.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit, a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans specified is necessary as it provides certainty. I have imposed a condition specifying materials as this is necessary to safeguard the character and appearance of the host site and its surrounding area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, I find that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions identified.

C Dillon

INSPECTOR