
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3253775

9 Devonshire Mews, Chiswick, London W4 2HA

- 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 Scot Drummond against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01247/9/P3, dated 12 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as the 'erection of loft extension and associated alteration'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The appellant has submitted alternative plans within their evidence. These show the proposed rear dormer reduced in width. Although submitted to the Council prior to issuing the Decision Notice, I have no evidence that the plans have been subject to public consultation and they did not form the basis of the Council's decision. Given the nature of the public objections, accepting these revised plans may prejudice the interests of the interested parties. Furthermore, it is not for the appeal procedure to advance proposals. This is best achieved through the submission of revised planning applications. As such, I have proceeded to determine the appeal on the basis of the plans on which the Council made its decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and
 - ii) the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is occupied by a two-storey terraced property split into two flats. To the rear, the terrace is characterised by a variety of alterations and extensions. These include single-storey extensions with catslide and lean-to

roof forms. The simple clean lines of the terrace's pitched slate roofs are key features of the rear elevation. They are visible within the public realm and positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The host building is one of the properties with a catslide-style roof form.

5. The proposal includes alterations to the ground floor fenestration, but this is not a contentious element of the scheme and I have no reason to disagree. However, the proposed rear dormer window would extend the full width of the appeal site onto the parapet walls. Furthermore, although lower than the top of the parapet walls, the proposal would extend up to the ridge and very close to the eaves. As such, the extension would occupy virtually the full extent of the rear roof, appearing as a large, bulky and dominant addition. This would significantly erode the characteristic simple roof form of the appeal property and be incongruous to the host building and terrace.
6. Whilst I have observed a number of more visually prominent dormer windows in the area, including on the terrace, none are the same as the proposal before me. For example, the dormer window at No 1 is discernibly smaller being set in from both sides of the property and well below the main ridge. As such, I do not find that any of the examples outweigh the issues I have identified.
7. Therefore, in conclusion on this main issue the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 Volume One (LP) and guidance within the London Borough of Hounslow, Residential Extension Guidelines, Supplementary Planning Document, A Guide for Householders, Adopted 20 December 2017. These seek, amongst other aims, to achieve high-quality design that responds to local vernacular, the character of the area, complements the original building and harmonises with adjoining properties. This is consistent with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that permission should be refused for development of poor design.

Living conditions

8. Both units at the appeal site are arranged to provide open plan living, dining and kitchen space to the front of the units, with outlook across the private access road to the back of the Devonshire Road properties. However, at the rear, natural light is provided to bedroom and bathroom accommodation by rooflights only and, given the height of the rooflights, they provide little outlook. I have not been provided with full details of the circumstances that led to this arrangement for the flats.
9. However, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires determination of planning applications such as this to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies CC2 and SC5 of the LP, amongst other aims seek high-quality design that has a positive impact on the living conditions of future residents with the highest quality internally.
10. The proposal facilitates an additional bedroom and shower room within the upper floor flat. The bedroom, albeit principally used for sleeping, is a habitable room. The proposal details the provision of obscure glazed windows to prevent loss of privacy for future occupiers of the development and occupants of the

residential flats to the rear. The proposal's provision of adequate privacy and light are basic requirements that weigh neutrally. The provision of outlook from habitable rooms is also a basic requirement and the lack of it does not reflect high-quality design.

11. The proposal would re-arrange the fenestration to the rear of the property, exchanging the existing rooflights for obscure glazed high-level windows. Based on the evidence provided, these would likely provide a comparable level of living conditions as the existing rooflights do. Therefore, whilst the lack of outlook is a concern, material considerations indicate that this is not objectionable for the existing bedrooms. However, based on the evidence available there is little justification for additional accommodation with no outlook. For example, the provision of more space to the existing dwelling does not address, or outweigh, the consequent poor-quality housing as a result of occupiers not being able to see out.
12. Therefore, in conclusion on this main issue the proposal would harm living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to outlook. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CC2 and SC5 of the LP.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR