The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2020

by Conor Rafferty LLB (Hons), AIEMA, Solicitor

Decision by Chris Preston BA(Hons) BPl MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/19/3249002
3 Firs Walk, Northwood HA6 2BZ

- 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 Mrs Manjit Kaur Soar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
- The application Ref 555/APP/2019/3768, dated 19 November 2019 was refused by notice dated 29 January 2020.
- The development proposed is described as 'single storey front extension, single storey side extension, first floor side extension and conversion of garage to habitable use to include alterations to front and rear elevations'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The reason for refusal refers only to the first floor side extension and single storey front extension. The Council has raised no objection to the small single storey side extension (to form a WC) or the conversion of the garage to habitable use. Given the limited scale of those elements and their relationship with the existing built form I see no reason to take a different view. As such, my report focusses on the areas in dispute between the parties.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is located in the Firs Walk cul-de-sac and comprises a two storey detached property with attached garage. The surrounding area is residential in nature and the street is made up of large, detached properties on spacious plots which vary in style and design. The dwelling appears to be influenced by the 'Arts and Crafts' style as is evident through the steeply pitched roof, the varied profile, the imposing two storey gable to the front and the steeply pitched cat-slide roof to the side. The result is a distinctive property with an attractive front façade,

notwithstanding the effect of the less than sympathetic flat roofed garage which projects beyond the front elevation.

6. The single storey front extension would project from the existing gable feature and would create a single building line with the adjoining garage. The extension would introduce a sizeable element of built form to the front elevation. It would extend wider than, and partially obscure, the existing distinct gable feature. The shallow roof pitch would be at odds with the characteristically steep pitch of the existing dwelling. As a result, the property would have a disjointed appearance at odds with its current style and design. That element of the proposal would be viewed as a continuation of the existing, less than sympathetic, flat roofed garage and would substantially erode the balance of the front façade.

7. The proposed side extension would comprise a hip to gable conversion, extending the first floor of the dwelling along the north west elevation. It would remove the steeply sloped roof along the side of the dwelling that currently appears as a defining characteristic of the property. It would result in a complicated roof profile that would fail to respect the design of the dwelling and, when combined with the proposed front extension, would result in a level and arrangement of built form at odds with the current character and appearance of the dwelling.

8. With regards to the impact on the surrounding area, it is acknowledged that there is no consistency in style and design among the properties on Firs Walk, with neighbouring dwellings benefitting from extensions projecting from the original front building lines. However, the design characteristics of those other properties are not replicated at the appeal site where the dwelling has its own distinctive design. It is further appreciated that the proposal would be set back from the road and largely screened from view due to the presence of hedging at the site.

9. Nonetheless, the proposal would remain visible from certain sections of the surrounding area. In this context the complicated front elevation and disjointed additions would appear out of place. Regardless of wider views, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the property itself and represents poor design. It is acknowledged that from the site the proposal would be experienced alongside views of the London College of Theology to the rear. However, this would not detract from the imposing and incongruous nature of the extensions which would fail to respect the character and appearance of host property in a predominantly residential setting.

10. For all of those reasons I find that the development would have a significantly adverse visual effect on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would fail to comply with Policies BE1 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies, November 2012; and Policies DMHB11 and DMHD1 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies, January 2020.

Other matters

11. Reference has been made to similar development in the surrounding area and I have been provided with an extract of an appeal decision[1]. However, limited information has been provided in terms of the nature of such development or the comparability with the proposal. My decision does not rest on the principle of extending a residential property but on the very specific circumstances relating to the design which would be harmful having regard to the distinct characteristics of the dwelling in question. It is not clear that those characteristics were replicated in the other appeal referred to.

12. The appellant has also referred to the property's permitted development rights, demonstrating that such rights would permit the construction of a two storey rear extension, outbuilding and porch at the appeal. The appellant argues such development would have a greater footprint than the proposal. However, it is the form and position of the current proposals that together result in harm to the host dwelling. As the cited fallback positions would not replicate a front or side extension, limited weight is attached to this argument.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. Having had regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rafferty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Preston

INSPECTOR

[1] APP/Y3615/D/13/2190932