



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2020

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3258874 53 Litchfield Road, Hounslow TW4 6HT

- 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 M Parmar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00694/53/P2, dated 17 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two storey side, single storey rear wrap-around extension and replacement of existing wall and new gate to the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the replacement of existing wall and new gate to the house. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the erection of a two storey side, single storey rear wrap-around extension, and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two storey side, single storey rear wrap-around extension, at 53 Litchfield Road, Hounslow TW4 6HT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 00694/53/P2, dated 17 April 2020, so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and 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, insofar as it relates to the erection of a two storey side, single storey rear wrap-around extension only, shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Existing and Proposed Floor Layout Drawing No ART/2020/DSS53LR/ELPL; Existing Elevations Drawing No ART/2020/DSS53LR/EE; Site Plan and Location Plan Drawing No ART/2020/DSS53LR/SPLP; Road View Drawing No ART/2020/DSS53LR/RV; and Proposed Elevations Drawing No ART/2020/DSS53LR/PE.
 - 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.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development from the decision notice. While different to that on the application form, following comments being sought from the main parties, it more accurately reflects the extent of the proposed development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues of the appeal are the effect of the proposed development on:

- The character and appearance of the area; and
- Highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site and much of Litchfield Road have predominantly open frontages with any boundary treatments being low level. This helps to create a spacious feel and contributes positively to the character of the area while maintaining a clear distinction between public and private space. This is also in contrast to the high side boundary walls of the site and the property opposite.
5. The height of the proposed railings and wall, that would span across much of the property frontage, would result in a starker and more imposing frontage. This would be incongruous with the existing streetscene. The corner location of the site would mean the boundary treatment to the front would be very conspicuous from the adjacent streets.
6. Consequently, the new wall and gates would harm the character and appearance of the area. They would fail to accord with Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan (Local Plan). These, in part, require developments to maintain and conserve the character of the area.
7. The proposed extension would only be marginally wider than half of the existing dwelling and have a lower ridge line than it. While the extension would be flush with the front wall at ground floor level, it would be set back at first floor level. Although this staggered set back is different to the property opposite, there are examples in Litchfield Road of such an arrangement.
8. The extension would be set in from the side boundary and matching brick is proposed. The height of the single storey rear extension would be relatively low and therefore not overly conspicuous from public views. A 2-storey side extension with wraparound to the rear would be a similar arrangement to the corner property opposite.
9. The appeal property is in a highly visible location. However, these factors would ensure that the proportions of the extension would not overwhelm the existing property and would prevent it having an overly bulky appearance. Being the corner property, a terracing effect would be avoided. In addition, there is already some variation in built form at the rear of this row of properties which the appeal scheme would be viewed with.
10. Consequently, the two storey side, single storey rear wrap-around extension would not harm the character and appearance of the area. They would comply with Policies CC1, CC2 and CC7 of the Local Plan. These, in part, require developments to maintain and conserve the character of the area.
11. Despite technical breaches of the Residential Extension Guidelines SPD, these parts of the scheme would accord with its aims to allow the original proportions of the building to remain prominent and that extensions are proportionate and subordinate to it.

Highway Safety

12. At present the majority of the appeal site frontage onto Litchfield Road is open. While individually the pillars would not be overly bulky, there would be several of them. In addition, the height of the proposed pillars and gates along the site frontage would obstruct the vision of drivers leaving the site, those along the road, and pedestrians walking towards it. Furthermore, while the gates and railings would allow views into the site from the front, the ability to see through them would be limited from more angled views on the approach to the site, further obstructing visibility for road users. This would lead to vehicles entering and leaving the site with unsatisfactory visibility.
13. At the time of my visit, which I appreciate is only a snapshot in time, there were several vehicles parked across the hard surface forecourt. Although the existing dropped kerb is close to the boundary with 51 Litchfield Road, vehicles would already need to cross over unsupported sections of the footway to reach the other parts of the forecourt. The proposed arrangement would largely replicate this. Were this part of the appeal scheme to be allowed, conditions could be imposed to require the dropping of the kerb prior to the installation of the gates.
14. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would result in harm to highway safety with regard to sight lines. The scheme would be contrary to Policy EC2 of the Local Plan and the Residential Crossovers and Off-Street Parking Policy SPD. These, amongst other things, seek to avoid adverse impacts on the transport network and require access points to be free of any permanent physical obstruction that would prevent a driver having clear sight.

Other Matters

15. The proposed gates and walls would provide additional protection from crime and anti-social behaviour. I note the evidence provided regarding previous incidents at the site, street and the wider area. Nevertheless, there are limited details before me of whether any alternative methods have been considered. Based on the individual circumstances of this case, and the information presented, the benefits of the walls and gates do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area and to highway safety that would result from them.
16. Examples of similar existing walls and gates in the area have been highlighted. Nonetheless, they are located in more enclosed streetscenes where taller boundary treatments are more prevalent and would not be seen with the proposed development. As such, they are not directly comparable to the appeal scheme.
17. The lack of harm to the living conditions of nearby properties is a neutral effect and does not weigh in favour of the scheme.

Conditions

18. In addition to the standard time limit condition, in the interests of certainty, a condition specifying the approved plans, and clarifying the elements of the scheme allowed is required. To protect the character and appearance of the area, a condition requiring the external materials to match that of the existing property is imposed.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as the erection of a two storey side, single storey rear wrap-around extension subject to the conditions above, but dismissed insofar as it relates to the replacement of existing wall and new gate to the house.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR