
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2020

by S. Rennie BSc (Hons), BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/20/3256253

15, 16 and 17 Little Common, Stanmore, London HA7 3BZ

- 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 Paul Conolly against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/1682/20, dated 18 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is for single storey rear extensions and rear dormers to 15, 16 and 17 Little Common.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey rear extensions and rear dormers to 15, 16 and 17 Little Common, Stanmore, London HA7 3BZ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/1682/20, dated 18 May 2020, subject to the conditions set out below:
 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 approved plans: Site Location Plan; Site Block Plan; 001; 002; 003; 004; 005; 006; 007; and 008.
 3. Prior to their use in the development hereby permitted, details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions/additions shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external materials used in the extensions/additions shall be only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.
 4. The roof area of the rear extensions hereby permitted shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity areas without the grant of further specific permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies.

Reasons

Green Belt

3. The site is within the Green Belt. The Framework states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, the Framework also sets out a number of exceptions in paragraph 145. One such exception allows for the extension or alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
4. The proposal is for a single storey flat roof extension and a single rear dormer to all three houses in this short terrace, along with some fencing. A recently allowed appeal at No 15 Little Common (ref: APP/M5450/D/20/3250216) is relevant and a material consideration with this subsequent appeal.
5. The Council consider that the scale of development is such that the extensions for each property could not be considered as proportionate. Therefore, the Council is of the opinion that this proposal would not meet with the Framework exception to Green Belt development which allows for extensions and additions to the original building. The Council have primarily based this on the fact that the footprint of the dwellings would increase by over 30%, as set out in the table within the Officer's Report. However, this benchmark of 30% is not included in the definition of what would be disproportionate in the Framework, although it is useful to gauge what is typically acceptable to the Council.
6. In this case, although these are sizable extensions, they are limited to single storey with a flat roof. The dwellings are full two storey, but with modest footprint areas, which I have taken into account. The plots have a considerable length and so the extensions would not overdevelop the plots. The dormers would also be modest additions to the rear roof slope. Cumulatively, when taken in the context of the original dwellings size and form, the proposed extensions would be of a volume and scale that I would regard as proportionate additions, even with the increases in footprint being over 30% and also taking into account existing extensions.
7. Therefore, whilst a margin of a 30% increase in footprint of a building may indicate a disproportionate extension in other cases, in this particular circumstance I have not found this to be the case. As I have concluded that the extensions as proposed would not be disproportionate additions then they would fall within one of the exceptions listed in the Framework, under paragraph 145c. The development would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, the proposal would have minimal impact to the openness of the area.
8. In this regard the proposal would be in accordance with policies 7.16 of the London Plan; policy G2 of the Draft London Plan, Core Policy CS1.F of the Core Strategy, and policy DM16 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan. which, amongst other things, seek to safeguard the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
9. Furthermore, the proposal is in accordance with the relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters – Heritage Impacts

10. A Grade II listed property at No. 13 Little Common is immediately adjacent to the terrace/appeal site. Given the modest scale and low profile of the development, their appropriate design, and the separation distance between the proposed extensions and the listed building, the visual impact would be limited. The proposed development would therefore preserve the significance of the listed building's setting.
11. Furthermore, the proposed extensions to these properties are of a suitable design which preserves the character and significance of the Little Common Conservation Area.

Conditions

12. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council against the requirements of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Framework. The conditions I have included from the recommended list have been subject to some alterations to improve clarity and ensure consistency with the Framework and PPG.
13. I have attached the standard time limit condition and a plans condition as this provides certainty. I have also added a condition concerning materials to ensure a satisfactory appearance.
14. In order to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties, I have also imposed a condition restricting the use of the flat roof over the single storey rear extension from being used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area.
15. Considering the rear elevation location and modest size of the proposed extensions and dormers I do not consider it reasonable or necessary to require details of brickwork style or fenestration. Furthermore, I have not included a condition to restrict further openings to the side elevations as I do not regard this as necessary to safeguard neighbour amenities given that these are single storey extensions.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to conditions.

Steven Rennie

INSPECTOR