



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2021

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 February 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/20/3264957

37 St Georges Road, Golders Green, London NW11 0LU

- 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 and Dr Rabbie against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 20/3443/HSE, dated 27 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part single, part 2-storey rear extension including 1 no roof light.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area; and on the living conditions of the occupiers of the ground floor flat at 35 St Georges Road with particular regard to outlook, light and sense of enclosure.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey semi-detached house that addresses St Georges Road within a predominantly residential area. Like many properties in the vicinity of the site, No 37 has been altered and extended. Specifically, a large flat roof dormer has been placed onto the rear roof slope and there is a full width ground floor rear addition with a part hipped, part flat roof. The site does not fall within a conservation area or the setting of a listed building.
4. The proposal is to replace the ground floor extension and also introduce a new first floor addition that would be set in by at least 2-metres from the site's side boundaries. This set back arrangement would comply with some of the advice within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Residential Design Guidance* (SPD). Nevertheless, the rear extension, as a whole, would still be a sizeable addition with the top of the new first floor element projecting above the base of the existing dormer, creating an uneasy overlap between them. There would also be an awkward juxtaposition of different rooflines in the new rear elevation with flat, hipped and mono-pitched roofs evident.

5. When seen together with the existing dormer extension, the proposal would result in a cumbersome enlargement of the appeal dwelling. In the light of the cumulative impact on the appeal dwelling together with the roof level extension, the proposal would be an unwieldy feature in the new rear façade due to its scale, design and roof form. Notwithstanding the use of external materials to match those of the host building, the proposal would be an unsympathetic form of development, which would be evident from the back gardens of the properties on either side of the site.
6. The appellants place some reliance on the rear extensions to properties in the local area notably along St Georges Road and Highcroft Gardens with some aerial photographs provided. Having spent some time looking at the rears of properties in the area to which No 37 belongs, I agree that there are several examples of 2-storey and large roof level extensions. While these additions form part of the character of the local area, their presence does not, however, necessarily signal that such schemes are therefore acceptable. From what I saw, the examples of first floor rear extensions in particular have blended into the visual character of the local area and respected the appearance and qualities of the host building with varying degrees of success. These cases serve to illustrate that even modest changes to the upper part of a building can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of that building and the area to which it belongs. Having carefully considered the examples cited by the appellants and those that I observed, these instances do not justify an unsympathetic form of development, as sought.
7. On the first main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. Accordingly, it is contrary to Policy DM01 of the Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) (DMP) and Policy CS5 of the Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) (CS). These policies aim to ensure that development respects the local context and preserves or enhances local character. These principles underpin the advice given in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Residential Design Guide*, (SPD) with which the proposal conflicts. It is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall qualities of the area.

Living conditions

8. The adjacent property to one side of the site is 35 St Georges Road, which has a ground floor flat with 2 windows in its side elevation that directly face the site. The Council raises no objection to the effect of the proposal on the rearmost of these windows, which appears to serve a bedroom. From the submitted evidence, I have no reason to disagree with that finding.
9. The Council does, however, have concerns about the effect of the new first floor element on the other ground floor side window of No 35, which is further away from the rear elevation of this adjacent property. When seen from this window, which I am advised serves a bedroom, the new first floor element would be set back from the boundary between the site and No 35 and its hipped roof would also angle away from view. By removing the existing lean-to store at ground level that is up this common boundary, as proposed, there would also be some improvement to the view from and the light reaching this window. When taken together, I consider that, while the proposed rear

extension would be clearly evident from this window, its presence would not be so great as to dominate outlook, overbear or unduly heighten a sense of enclosure. Consequently, the living conditions of the occupiers of the ground floor flat at No 35 would not be materially reduced.

10. Therefore, the proposal does not conflict with DMP Policy DM01, CS Policies CS1 and CS5, Policy 7.6 of the London Plan and the Council's SPD insofar as they aim to safeguard residential amenity. My favourable finding on this matter does not outweigh the harm that I have found in relation to the first main issue.

Other matters

11. I note that the proposal was revised in the light of the Council's refusal to grant planning permission for a similar extension at the back of No 37. Once complete, the enlarged property would provide additional living space that is needed for the appellants' family. It would also allow the building to be updated to modern standards and offer an opportunity to address the condition of the existing rear roof. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR