



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2021

by Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/20/3263074
49 Gayton Road, Harrow HA1 2LT

- 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 Pidgeon against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/2727/20, dated 5 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "Enlargement of east dormer with part pitched roof and gable end and re-cladding of west dormer together with adding part pitched roof with gable end".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The London Plan 2021 (the 'LP 2021') was published by the Mayor of London on 2 March 2021. The LP 2021 comprises the spatial development strategy for London and forms part of the development plan. The LP 2021 supersedes the London Plan of 2016.
3. It is incumbent on me to take into account the most relevant and up to date information in reaching a decision and I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis. The main parties have had an opportunity to address this matter as part of the appeal process.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two-storey detached building located on the northern side of Gayton Road, near to the junction with Northwick Park Road. Together with No 47 Gayton Road, the property forms the Gayton Hotel. The existing building features a two-storey flat roof element to the front and side and roof level accommodation, which is provided by dormer windows located either side of the gable roof.
6. It is proposed to enlarge the existing side dormers to provide additional hotel accommodation at second floor level. Both dormer windows would be extended

in width bringing them closer to the principal elevation of the host building. To facilitate these works, the existing chimney stack would be removed. In addition, the eastern facing dormer window would be extended outwards over the existing two storey flat roof section of the building. The street facing aspect of the respective dormer windows would have a gable roof form with a flat roof behind. Externally the dormer windows would be clad with hanging tiles to match the host building.

7. Policy CS1 of the Harrow Core Strategy: February 2012 (the 'CS') explains that all development should respond positively to the local context and reinforce the positive attributes of local distinctiveness whilst promoting innovative design and/or enhancing areas of poor design. Moreover, it states that extensions should respect their host building.
8. Policy DM1 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies: July 2013 (the 'DMP') states that all development and change of use proposals must achieve a high standard of design and layout. Proposals which fail to achieve a high standard of design and layout, or which are detrimental to local character and appearance, will be resisted.
9. Despite the use of exterior tile hanging, the overall bulk, scale and mass of the extended dormer windows, in particular the eastern facing dormer window, which would be extended outwards over the existing two storey flat roof section of the building, would be significant and excessive in the context of the proportions of the host building and its original gable roof form.
10. Owing to the significant proportions of the proposed dormer windows and their gable roof form design, in addition to their positioning near to the forward facing gable end of the host building, I consider that the extended building would appear top heavy and unbalanced when viewed from the street. As such, the proposed dormer windows would appear as a prominent and intrusive form of development when viewed in the context of the local roofscape.
11. Overall, the proposal would be an unsympathetic form of development, which would unacceptably diminish the architectural integrity of the host building and cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
12. The existing dormer windows are set down from the ridge of the host building and are positioned well back from the building's principal elevation. Therefore, the dormers appear well balanced and have a subordinate relationship with the host building. Consequently, and, given my findings above, I disagree with the appellant's position that the proposal would represent an overall improvement to the design and appearance of the host building.
13. The appellant argues that passers-by on Gayton Road would have limited views of the proposed dormer windows due to the screening effect provided by the neighbouring buildings. Given the significant scale of the proposed dormer windows and their close proximity to the principal elevation of the host building, I do not share the appellant's position on this matter. Moreover, the proposed dormer window on the eastern elevation would be prominent in the local roofscape when viewed from Northwick Park Road on the pavement outside of Excelsior Apartments.
14. I am cognisant that many of the nearby properties on Gayton Road feature roof level extensions and dormer windows. However, on my site visit, I observed

that the existing alterations are typically well related and subordinate to the respective host buildings. As set out above, this would not be the case with the appeal proposal.

15. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would not accord with the aforementioned requirements of Policy CS1 of the CS of Policy DM1 of the DMP.
16. Paragraph 213 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') explains that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given). In this instance, I consider that Policy CS1 of the CS of Policy DM1 of the DMP are consistent with the Framework's aims of securing good, contextually appropriate design and therefore I afford the conflict with them significant weight.
17. Given my findings, I also conclude that the proposal would also be inconsistent with paragraph 127(c) of the Framework, which requires development to be sympathetic to the local character. Paragraph 130 of the Framework makes clear that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.
18. The Council state that Policies D1 and D2 of the LP 2021 are relevant to the appeal proposal. However, Policy D1 relates to plan making and encourages Boroughs to undertake area assessments to understand different areas' capacity for growth. Policy D2 relates to infrastructure requirements to support new development. Given that the proposal relates to the extension of an existing hotel, as opposed to plan-led growth, and, that the Council's reason for refusal on the decision notice makes no reference to the adequacy or otherwise of existing infrastructure, I consider these policies are not applicable in respect of this main issue.
19. In respect of this main issue, the Council have drawn my attention to guidance contained within the Harrow Council Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (the 'SPD'). However, the introduction section of the SPD states that the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for new residential development (including changes of use to residential), conversions of houses to flats, and householder development. Given that the proposal is none of these forms of development, I consider that the SPD is not applicable in this case.

Other Matters

20. The proposed development would provide additional hotel accommodation near to the Westminster University Campus and Northwick Park Hospital. Such accommodation could be used by visitors of these establishments, which would provide economic and social benefits to the local area. These positive matters weigh in favour of the proposal. However, such benefits would not overcome or outweigh the very weighty conflict with the identified development plan policies as outlined above.

Conclusion

21. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Christopher Miell
INSPECTOR