

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 April 2021

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/20/3262522

Hillsfoot, 23 Orley Farm Road, Harrow, HA1 3PF

- 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 S Clarke (Clarke Associates) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/2071/20, dated 19 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is alterations to existing garage to create pitched roof for use ancillary to main dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. A previous application¹ for “alterations to garage to create pitched roof with first floor level for use ancillary to main dwelling; external alterations” was refused and dismissed at appeal². The appellant notes that the proposed development the subject of this appeal seeks to address the reasons for refusal of this previous application, as well as the concerns raised in the previous appeal decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed development would conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the South Hill Avenue Conservation Area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling with a detached single storey garage/store located towards the front of the site, adjacent to Orley Farm Road.
5. The appeal property is located within a residential area, next to the junction between Orley Farm Road and Wood End Road and is situated within the South

¹ Ref: P/3621/16.

² Ref: APP/M5450/D/16/3165219.

Hill Avenue Conservation Area, which is characterised by the presence of Arts and Crafts-style properties, along with 'Garden suburb'-style dwellings, set within spacious garden plots, with wide grass verges, attractive gardens and a leafy streetscape. Consequently, attractive period properties draw attention to themselves within a setting notable for its significant sense of greenery, openness and spaciousness.

6. The appeal property is described within the South Hill Avenue Conservation Area Study 2008 (SHACAS) as impressive and as marking the introduction to the Conservation Area from Wood End Road. It is set within a comfortable garden plot, with parking and a wide grass verge to the front.
7. The garage the subject of this appeal, located to the front of the house, is low in height, with a profiled sheet metal flat roof and is modest in appearance. Despite its prominent location, it does not draw attention to itself but sits partly hidden behind greenery and as such, it makes a neutral contribution to local character.
8. The SHACAS recognises the common presence of garages in the area and notes that they comprise integral features which add variety to and complement the Conservation Area's sense of openness by providing for visual interest between buildings. The SHACAS advises that garages should be retained and should not be developed into office space or living accommodation.
9. Whilst the existing garage is not original, its low height means that, despite being situated adjacent to a prominent corner at the introduction to the Conservation Area, it does not detract from the Conservation Area's important sense of greenery, openness and spaciousness.
10. By way of contrast, the proposed development would, in providing for accommodation at first floor level, add significant bulk and height to the existing structure. I find that this would greatly alter the current modest and unassuming appearance of the garage as the proposed development would draw attention to itself as a tall and bulky feature in a prominent location.
11. Further to the above, the proposed development would, as a result of its prominent position, height and overall bulk, fail to appear subservient to the host property and would instead compete with it, both in views from within the Conservation Area and from Wood End Road, even taking into account a difference in levels between the garage and house.
12. In addition, I find that the proposed development would, as a result of its location, height and scale, draw attention to itself as an unduly dominant feature and that this would erode the sense of openness at an important entrance to the Conservation Area.
13. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed development would fail to conserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area. Having regard to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and paragraph 017 of the Planning Practice Guidance, I consider that the harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be less than substantial. This needs to be balanced against any public benefits the development may bring.

14. Whilst in support of his case, the appellant considers that the proposal would result in reduced carbon emissions and benefits for local services and businesses from additional use of the appeal property due to home working rather than commuting, there is no substantial evidence to demonstrate that such benefits would amount to such public benefits that they would outweigh the harm identified.
15. Consequently, I find that the proposal would fail to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the South Hill Conservation Area, contrary to the Framework, to London Plan (2016) Policies 7.4B, 7.6B and 7.8 C/D, to Core Strategy³ Policies CS1.B and CS1.D, to DMP⁴ Policies DM1, DM6 and DM7, to the guidance in the SHACAS and to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guide (2010), which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Other Matters

16. One of the Council's reasons for refusal refers to the absence of information in respect of the potential impact of the proposed development on adjacent trees. However, there is evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development is unlikely to result in conflict with adjacent trees and in any case, I am mindful that the appellant would accept a condition providing for appropriate tree protection measures.
17. Whilst I note the appellant's view that the existing garage currently has a poor quality flat roof, I am conscious that there is no evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development comprises the only way in which a higher quality roof might be provided.
18. In support of his case, the appellant refers to other developments in the vicinity. However, I have found that the proposed development would fail to conserve the appearance of the Conservation Area and this is not a factor that is mitigated by the presence of other developments elsewhere.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR

³ Reference: Harrow Core Strategy (2012).

⁴ Reference: Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (2013).