

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2021

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/20/3262326

66 Cuckoo Hill Road, Pinner HA5 1AX

- 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 Russell Everton, (100A Architects Ltd) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application, Ref. P/1946/20, dated 11 June 2020 was refused by notice dated 1 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension; front entrance canopy; alterations to garage roof to form flat roof; re-location of main entrance; conversion of garage to habitable room; external alterations (part demolition of attached garage and front porch).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey front extension; front entrance canopy; alterations to garage roof to form flat roof; re-location of main entrance; conversion of garage to habitable room; external alterations (part demolition of attached garage and front porch) in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. P/1946/20, dated 11 June 2020 and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development to which this permission relates shall begin not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 000; 001; 002; 003; 010; 101; 102 Rev. A; 103; 110 Rev. A;
 - 3) The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with details and samples of external materials first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The Council's objection is that the external materials would fail to match the existing property or represent high quality design. As such it is considered that the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene would be
-

harmed in conflict with development plan policies, the Council's Residential Design Guide and Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

4. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application confirms that the part of Cuckoo Hill Road which includes the appeal property is formed by 1960's houses. I consider these are typical of a fairly upmarket estate development of that era by a volume developer and identical buildings can be seen in many locations throughout the country. And as invariably is the case, a number of these have had subsequent additions, including in Cuckoo Hill Road a two storey extension to No. 66 itself.
5. However, No. 68 next door has recently undergone a complete change of appearance in the form of a number of extensions. These alterations include a slate roof and a single storey extensively glazed flat roofed extension stretching across the full width of the dwelling's frontage. However, the most striking change from the original house is the smooth white render of the exterior walls. As regards the latter, the officer's report on the appeal application says that this rendering is '*despite historic planning permissions conditioning materials to match the existing dwelling*'. There is no mention of any pending enforcement action in respect of this apparent breach of conditions.
6. The effect of No. 68's alterations is a noticeable change to the street scene on this side of the road. Whilst originally comprising a row of 1960's houses with their formulaic design and standardised external materials of tiled roofs and front elevations combining facing brickwork with tile hanging, this is now interrupted by the clean lines of the fully rendered and much more contemporary appearance of No. 68. Given No. 68's position between two 1960's dwellings this in itself is an example of the incongruity that the Council argue would be caused by the implementation of the appeal proposal.
7. However, No. 66 is at a bend in the road and because of the change in levels is higher up than No. 64 which has a different orientation on its plot resulting in the dwelling being separated from No. 66 by its rear garden. The garden has mature vegetation and the effect of these differences is that No. 66 does not in any way read with No. 64 in the street scene. The appeal dwelling is seen mainly with the now overtly modernised No. 68, albeit to a lesser extent with the altered 1960's houses stretching to the end of the cul-de-sac.
8. In these circumstances I consider that with the rhythm of the street scene disrupted by No. 68, the justification for the Council's requirement for No. 66 to essentially retain its external materials of the original 1960's design no longer applies. Indeed, it can be reasonably argued that to do so would be more incongruous in south eastern views along the top of the road than having two dwellings of individual appearance at the end of the row.
9. Accordingly, to the extent that the appeal scheme does not comply with some aspects of the Council's policies and Design Guide, I regard it as a justifiable exception. And in coming to this view I am also mindful firstly that the lower and older part of Cuckoo Hill is comprised of houses of individual design and secondly that the 1960's houses, whilst not unpleasing, are neither locally distinctive nor of any particular design merit.

10. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning. A condition requiring the submission of samples for the external materials for the Council's approval is justified to ensure they are of an appropriate quality in the interests of visual amenity, and indeed was offered in the grounds of appeal.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR