
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2021

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A5270/D/20/3262912

58 Lavington Road, West Ealing, London W13 9LS

- 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 Edd Stockwell against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing.
 - The application Ref 201965FUL, dated 20 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion and associated internal alterations to the first floor, adding a full width dormer to the original rear of the dwellinghouse, in addition to three rooflights to the front elevation and two rooflights to the flat roof of the proposed loft at 58 Lavington Road, London W13 9LS.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. An application for costs has been made by the appellant against the Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.
3. The appeal property has a full width ground floor rear extension that is not shown on the submitted plans. I have taken this existing rear projection into account in my assessment of the proposal.
4. Since the appeal was lodged, the London Plan 2021 (LP) has been published. The LP comprises the spatial development strategy for London and is now part of the development plan. As the LP replaced earlier versions, to which the evidence refers, comments were sought in relation to it. I have assessed the proposal in the light of any comments received and the LP.

Main issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development firstly, on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area; and secondly, on the living conditions of the occupiers of 60 Lavington Road with particular regard to sense of enclosure.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal property is a 2-storey semi-detached house with a hipped roof in a predominantly residential area wherein 2-storey dwellings predominate. I saw

that several buildings in the vicinity of the site have been externally altered and extended, including the adjacent property, which is 56 Lavington Road. Consequently, there is some variety to the existing built form in the local area to which No 58 belongs.

7. The sidewall and roof of No 58 are to be altered from a hip to a gable end with a dormer placed onto the extended rear roof slope. The proposed dormer would extend across the entire width of the host roof with the top broadly at the same height as the main ridge. The plans clearly show that it would also project rearwards beyond the main eaves onto part of the existing 2-storey outrigger. As a result, almost none of the existing rear roof to the main house would be evident with the new built form in place. To my mind, the proposed dormer would appear as an overly large 'box like' extension, the size and mass of which would give the host building an awkward top-heavy appearance.
8. The Council's Interim Supplementary Planning Document, *SPD4 Residential Extensions* (SPD) advises that rear extensions should be subordinate to the original dwelling. It also states that dormer windows should respect the character of the original dwelling and should not take up the entire area of a roof slope. The proposal would be at odds with this planning guidance.
9. While the new dormer would not be readily visible from the road it would be conspicuous from the rear gardens of the properties on either side of the site. From these locations, the new dormer would draw the eye as an overly large and bulky structure that would visually dominate the rear façade even with a full width ground floor rear projection in place. It would detract from the visual character of the local area. In reaching this conclusion, I have taken into account the proposed use of external materials to match the existing house.
10. The appellant places some reliance on the precedents that he considers have been created by extensions to dwellings in the vicinity of the site notably along Lavington Road and Rathgar Avenue with some background details and photographs provided. Having spent some time looking at properties in the local area, I agree that there are several examples of buildings with large rear roof level extensions. While these additions form part of the character of the area, their presence does not, however, necessarily signal that such schemes are therefore acceptable. The rear roof extension at No 56, for instance, provides little support for the appeal because it exemplifies the harm to which I have referred. Consequently, it does not set a desirable precedent. The same could be said for several other rear roof extensions highlighted by the appellant. With regard to No 60, the Council has confirmed that it could be carried out through the exercise of permitted development rights, which clearly differentiates it from the proposal. Having carefully considered each of the examples put forward by the appellant, these do not justify an unsympathetic form of development, as sought.
11. On the first main issue, I therefore conclude that the new rear dormer and proposed hip to gable alteration would materially harm the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. The proposal conflicts with Policies 7.4 and 7B of the Ealing Development Management Development Plan Document and the Council's SPD. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development has a positive visual impact, achieves high quality architecture and respects local character with reference to scale and building

pattern. It would also be contrary to LP Policies D3 and D4, which seek to make sure that development achieves good design.

Living conditions

12. As the new dormer would be above and largely behind the main 2-storey rear wall of 60 Lavington Road, it would not be readily seen from its rear-facing windows. Consequently, the proposal would not heighten a sense of enclosure as experienced by the occupiers of this house, which is attached to No 58.
13. On the second main issue, I conclude that the proposal would not materially reduce the living conditions of the occupiers of No 60. Accordingly, there is no conflict with the policies and guidance cited by the Council and within the LP insofar as they aim to safeguard residential amenity. My favourable finding on this matter does not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified in relation to the first main issue.

Other matters

14. The proposal would make efficient use of the space available. Once complete, it would provide additional accommodation that would enhance the living conditions of the appellant. However, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It also notes that development should add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character. As the new dormer and proposed roof alterations would not do so, the balance of national policy is tipped firmly against the appeal scheme.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, and taking into account the absence of objections from others, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR