



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 25 May 2021

by A Caines BSc(Hons) MSc TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/21/3266994

133 Sandhurst Road, London NW9 9LL

- 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 P Bhuvra against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 20/2804, dated 9 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 31 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is hip to gable roof extension & rear dormer window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application has been made retrospectively and I have considered the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area; and upon the living conditions of the occupiers of 137 Sandhurst Road, with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The site is located within a residential cul-de-sac of two-storey, semi-detached houses. All of the houses in the cul-de-sac are of the same type, albeit some have been altered and extended in various ways. The same house type is also found in other parts of Sandhurst Road and Beverley Drive to the north. One of the original features of this particular house type is a small hipped-roof, two-storey side projection.
5. From the information before me, it appears that the Council has previously granted planning permission (ref: 20/0059) for a hip-to-gable roof extension and rear dormer window. However, unlike the appeal scheme, it seems that the approved dormer was designed to be set in from the gable end and consequently did not overlap onto the small side projection.
6. As now constructed, the continuation of the flat roofed rear dormer beyond the gable of the main roof and above the small side projection has resulted in an unconventional feature at the side of the house. Its box-like form lacks architectural subtlety and is conspicuous in views from within the cul-de-sac

and neighbouring properties. Thus, even though the dormer complies with the Council's Extensions and Alterations SPD¹ in terms of the distance from the ridge and eaves, the development as a whole is an incongruous addition to the building, which has harmed its appearance, with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

7. A very similar development has been constructed at 183 Beverley Drive immediately behind the appeal site. However, I am not aware of the circumstances of how it came to exist. In any event, it does not contribute positively to the area, and for the reasons above, the appeal scheme would exacerbate this. Its presence is therefore not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. Furthermore, if I were to allow the appeal it would make it more difficult to resist similar proposals, which given the number of properties in the area where this form of development could be repeated, would cumulatively erode the character of the area over time. The absence of objections from neighbours is noted, but does not justify the harm caused by the development.
8. I therefore conclude, on this issue, that the development unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. This is contrary to Policy DMP1 of the Brent Development Management Policies Plan (2018) (the BDMP), which amongst other things, requires that development is of a design and scale that complements the locality. It is also contrary to the general aims of the SPD, which advises that roof alterations should be designed to complement the home and original street character.

Living conditions

9. The Council's delegated report raises concern over a "first floor flank window". However, according to the drawings there has been no change to the windows at first floor. In any event they appear to serve the stairwell and bathroom.
10. A new flank window has been inserted at second floor level as part of the loft conversion works. However, according to the drawings, this too serves the stairwell. Thus, even though it is capable of opening, it would not lead to an unacceptable loss of privacy to any neighbours, particularly those at No 137.
11. I therefore conclude, on this issue, that the development would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of 137 Sandhurst Road, with particular regard to privacy. In this respect, the proposal complies with the amenity aims of BDMP Policy DMP1, and the SPD.

Conclusion

12. I have found that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. This provides a clear justification for finding the proposal to be unacceptable. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR

¹ Brent Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD 2 (Jan 2018)