



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 June 2021

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/20/3264209

66 Ladbroke Drive, POTTERS BAR, EN6 1QW

- 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 Mrs Selina Kanji against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0993/HSE, dated 7 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is porch with gable end and dual pitched roof. Proposed rear extension to ground floor and loft conversion and crowned roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, 66 Ladbroke Drive, is a modest, L-shaped, semi-detached bungalow with accommodation within the roof space which is served by a dormer window to the rear. Ladbroke Drive is largely characterised by other, similar, pairs of bungalows, interspersed with some detached bungalows and a handful of larger, two-storey, dwellings.
4. The proposal is for a new porch to the front of the property, a ground floor rear extension and a loft conversion and crown roof. The Council state the proposed porch would be acceptable and have not expressed any concerns regarding this element of the proposal. I concur with the Council's view and consider that the proposed porch would be designed in such a way so as to appear as a proportionate and sensitive addition to the property which would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
5. Conversely, the proposed rear extension and roof alterations would be exceptionally large and would, in my view, overwhelm the rear elevation of No 66. The proposed alterations would appear disproportionately large and would not be subservient to the host dwelling. Furthermore, the proposed crown roof would be large and bulky and would appear as a dominant feature of the dwelling. The use of a crown roof would introduce a roof form which would appear incongruous and would not assimilate well within its context. In my view, the proposed extensions would appear as unsympathetic additions which would fail to respect the modest scale and proportions of the host dwelling.

6. I recognise that the front elevation of the host dwelling would not be significantly altered by the proposal and note that the proposal mainly involves alterations to the rear of the property which is typically more screened from public view. However, due to the layout and design of the properties along the street, the side elevations and roof profiles of many of the properties, including the appeal dwelling, are, nevertheless, visible from the road. In this instance, due to the size of the proposed extensions and crown roof I consider that the proposal would appear as a visually jarring addition to the host dwelling which would fail to integrate well within an area which is largely characterised by modest dwellings.
7. I note that No 66 benefits from a large rear garden with mature planting and also acknowledge that the garden slopes substantially downwards towards the rear of the plot. These factors would, however, not be sufficient to mitigate the harm I have identified above.
8. The proposal would have the beneficial effect of unifying the rear of the property which currently comprises a number of incoherent, separate elements and would enhance the living conditions of the occupiers of No 66 Ladbrooke Drive. I also recognise that the proposal would provide some, limited, benefits for example the economic benefits of engaging local professionals, trades and suppliers. These benefits are, however, extremely limited by the small scale of the proposal and must be considered in that context.
9. Whilst the appellant makes reference to the existence of a number of other properties which could be considered similar, each case must be determined on its individual merits, and the circumstances in each case are likely to be different. Though I note the existence of some larger properties and, indeed, some examples of other extensions in the vicinity of the appeal site, the prevailing characteristics of the area are, nevertheless, the aforementioned small scale dwellings. In my view, the larger properties are the exception rather than the rule. Furthermore, on the basis of my observations on site, the other extensions mentioned, mostly involve the use of large dormer windows rather than crown roofs and generally appeared smaller and of different designs to that proposed in this instance. Moreover, a number of the examples cited have markedly different original appearances and the layouts and circumstances on site also appear different.
10. I have given careful regard to all of the above considerations. However, none are sufficient to dissuade me from the conclusions I have reached above. Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, I consider that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.
11. The proposal would therefore fail to accord with Policy SADM30 of the Hertsmere Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan, adopted November 2016 (LP) and Policies SP1 and CS22 of the Hertsmere Local Plan Development Plan Document Core Strategy, adopted January 2013 (CS). These policies, amongst other things, seek high quality design which is appropriate in scale and appearance to the local context.
12. The proposal would also conflict with Part E: Guidelines for Residential Extensions and Alterations, November 2006 of the Council's Planning and Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which, amongst other things, holds that roof extensions should be designed to make sure that the extension remains a subservient feature of the existing house and states that

crown or mansard roofs on large extensions will be rejected as they often detract from the design and character of the existing house. Further guidance within the 2016 draft Part D: Guidelines for High Quality Sustainable Development of the SPG would also fail to be met. Though, as it is in draft form, this guidance contains limited weight, Part D states that crown roofs can often appear bulky or overbearing so should usually be avoided in residential developments.

13. The Council make reference to Policy SADM3 of the LP. However, in my reading, this policy is mainly concerned with the loss of residential units and the conversion of existing buildings and therefore carries limited weight in my assessment of the scheme before me. Additionally, the Council refer to Policy SP2 of the CS; as this policy refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development it too carries limited weight with regards to the development before me.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would not accord with the development plan when it is considered as a whole and I have not identified any material considerations which indicate that the appeal should be allowed. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J O'Brien

INSPECTOR