
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2021

by R Bartlett PGDIP URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/21/3267537

71 Slewins Lane, Hornchurch, Romford, Essex, RM11 2BY

- 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 Tee Singh against the decision of the London Borough of Havering Council.
 - The application Ref P1506.20, dated 12 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is double storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the Local Planning Authority (LPA) refused the application, which is the subject of this appeal, it has granted planning permission for first floor extensions to No. 69 Slewins Lane. Although this planning permission had not been implemented at the time of my visit, as it has been brought to my attention, I must have regard to it. A copy of the decision notice and the approved plans were obtained from the LPA prior to reaching my decision. Until this planning permission expires or the approved development is completed, the impact of any development at No.71 must be considered against both what is existing and what is approved at No.69.
3. The proposed roof plan does not match the proposed floor plans, elevations or block plan on the submitted drawings.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the streetscape; and
 - the living conditions of neighbours at No. 69 Slewins Lane.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The site comprises an extended two-storey detached house on a generous plot of land. Adjacent houses are varied in terms of type, scale, design and materials. However, they are generally detached or semi-detached, two storey

- properties, which follow a strong linear building line, set back from the road, with long rear gardens and with clear gaps between buildings.
6. It is proposed to extend the dwelling to the side in order to create a larger kitchen/dining room on the ground floor with an extended and an additional bedroom above. The first floor of the extension would overhang the ground floor area to the front and according to the roof plan, there would be a further covered hipped roof area to the front of that, extending up to the external chimney breast, which is forward of the front of No. 69 Slewins Lane.
 7. The extension has been designed to follow the shape of the plot and to make the best use of the space available rather than to reflect the character of the existing dwelling and its surroundings. Nos. 69 and 71 Slewins Lane are situated on a slight bend in the road. Both plots are wider at the front than at the rear and the houses are sited at slightly different angles, splayed away from one another, particularly at the front. By following the angled line of the plot, rather than the straight line of the house, the gap between the dwellings at the front would be significantly diminished. Given that planning permission has been granted for a first floor extension above the garage of No.69, which would only be very marginally set in from the boundary, the appeal proposal, which would not be set in at all from the boundary, would result in a terracing effect that would detract from the detached character of Nos. 69 and 71 Slewins Lane and the pattern of spaces between buildings that make a positive contribution to the street scene.
 8. Moreover, the attempt to fill the awkward shaped space up to the boundary and the first floor overhanging element to the front results in a poor quality of design, which detracts from the appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. An extension aligned with the building, rather than the boundary, would assist in retaining the most visible element of the gap between the front of Nos. 69 and 71 as well as achieving a more coherent design that reflects that of the existing dwelling.
 9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be contrary to policy DC61 of the London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Adopted 2008 (CS & DCP), which seeks to ensure new development is of good design, which maintains the character and appearance of the local area. The proposal would also conflict with the council's adopted Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which seeks to resist extensions of detached houses up to the side boundaries and seeks to retain the spacing between dwellings.

Living conditions

10. No.69 Slewins Lane currently has two first floor dormer windows facing the appeal site. From the plans I have received of the extension approved at No.69, it is evident that these windows serve a bedroom and a bathroom.
11. The proposed extension, which would contain a bedroom window in the side elevation, would be to the south of and up to the boundary shared by No.69, resulting in an unacceptable loss of privacy, light and outlook to the bedroom window of No.69. Whilst I note the council suggest the proposed bedroom window could be obscure glazed and none opening below 1.7m this is far from ideal, particularly in terms of emergency escape or rescue.

12. Whilst I acknowledge that it is proposed to relocate the bedroom window of No.69 to the front of the house, until that work has been completed it is necessary to consider both what exists now and what has been approved.
13. The approved development at No.69, whilst relocating its own bedroom window to the front, would result in a gable wall, almost directly opposite and in very close proximity to the bedroom window in the proposed extension. As a result, the proposed bedroom extension would not have an appropriate standard of light or outlook.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would adversely impact on the living conditions of residents at No.69, unless or until the approved extension to that property is completed. Moreover, the proposed side bedroom window in the appeal scheme would have unacceptable levels of privacy, light and outlook. The proposal would therefore conflict with policy DC61 of the CS & DCP and the adopted SPD, which state that permission will not be granted for proposals that would result in unacceptable overshadowing, loss of sunlight/daylight, overlooking or loss of privacy.

Other Matters

15. Whilst I note that the LPA approved a first floor extension almost up to the boundary of neighbouring No.69 very shortly after refusing the extension at No.71, there are subtle differences in circumstances, namely that the design, the eaves and ridge heights and the roof form align with and reflect the design of the existing dwelling and the first floor extensions are set in from the boundary, albeit very marginally at the front. The ground floor garage at No.69 already abuts the site boundary.
16. I acknowledge that the Appellant would be re-rendering the whole of the property as well as improving its energy efficiency. However, these benefits are not dependent upon the proposed extension and could be undertaken independently without the need for planning permission should the Appellant wish to make such improvements.
17. The absence of objections from any neighbours is not sufficient to outweigh the conflict I have identified with planning policy and although it is unfortunate that attempts to negotiate an appropriate solution with the LPA were unsuccessful, I am only able to consider the plans that have been formally submitted and that are currently before me.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR