
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2021

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/21/3270890

21 Cheyne Avenue, Twickenham TW2 6AN

- 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 Dr Ramnik Mathur against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 21/0021/HOT, dated 5 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first floor rear/side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The Council states that the submitted plans are inaccurate. Nevertheless, there is sufficient detail on the drawings to clearly illustrate the proposal and to enable a reasonable assessment of the development sought.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey semi-detached house that lies within a predominantly residential area wherein buildings vary in scale, design and general appearance. Notable features of the appeal dwelling include a long 'cat slide' roof and a sizeable flat roof dormer extension at the side.
5. The proposal is to enlarge No 21 with a first floor extension by elongating the existing side dormer rearwards and by introducing new built form beyond the main rear wall. As these new elements would slightly differ to each other in their height, rear build line and fenestration, the proposal would appear somewhat disjointed when seen from the back garden of No 21.
6. By extending across almost the full width of the main house and connecting with the existing side dormer, the proposal would result in a first floor with a flat roof covering almost the entire rear and side of the property. As the new rear addition would project well beyond the plane of the 'cat slide' roof, it would also visually compete with and thus detract from the original roof form. Due to its considerable scale, unsympathetic design and prominent high-level position, the proposal would overwhelm the rear façade of the main house.

The main outcome would be significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building.

7. The appellant places some reliance on the rear and side extensions carried out at the attached property, which is 23 Cheyne Avenue. From what I saw, No 23 has a part single storey, part 2-storey rear extension with a flat roof at first floor level. The introduction of a substantial new built form, as proposed, would, to some extent, restore some sense of balance in the upper rear façade of this pair. However, the Council states that the rear extension at No 23 does not have planning permission because the scheme, as built, departs from the approved plans. Whether or not that is the case, the rear extension at No 23 serves to illustrate that changes to the upper part of a building can have a very significant impact on the character and appearance of that building and the area to which it belongs. Having viewed No 23 from the rear garden of the appeal dwelling, I consider that it does not justify a discordant form of development, as sought.
8. The new rear addition would not be evident from public vantage points given its position at the back of the main house. It would nonetheless form part of the characteristics of the area as experienced and appreciated from nearby properties. When viewed from the rear of No 23, for instance, the proposed extension would appear as an uncharacteristically large and bulky addition. In reaching this conclusion, I have had regard to the proposed use of external materials to match the existing building. A good-sized back garden would remain with the new built form in place.
9. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document *House Extensions and External Alterations* (SPD) advises that the overall shape, size and position of extensions should not dominate the existing house and should harmonise with its original appearance. For the reasons given, the proposed development would not adhere to these important principles.
10. On the main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policy LP1 of the Local Plan, the Council's SPD and the Whitton and Heathfield Village Planning Guidance. Together, this policy and guidance aim to ensure that new development achieves a high standard of design quality and contributes to and enhances the local environment and character.
11. Once complete, the proposal would provide additional living space that would improve the living conditions of the appellant and his family. However, this consideration does not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR