

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2021

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/21/3275778

66 Parkwood Road, Isleworth TW7 5HD

- 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 L Sekhon against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00865/66/P4, dated 26 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is the removal of an existing deck and replacement with new decking including changes in ground levels.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary issue

2. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in July 2021, after the submission of this appeal. I take this revised policy into account, but do not consider that the changes to the Framework significantly affect the consideration of these appeals.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on:
 - i) living conditions at the next door properties 64 and 68 Parkwood Road, in terms of impacts on privacy and outlook; and
 - ii) the character and appearance of the house and the local area.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. 66 Parkwood Road is a semi-detached house sitting within a row of similar houses on land that drops down steeply to the rear. As I saw at my site visit, there is a large area of decking across the full width of the plot at the back of a single storey rear extension. Although this decking is at the house's ground floor level, it is elevated well above the sloping back gardens on this part of Parkwood Road. The proposal would replace the existing deck, which is not authorised, with a new deck at the same height but not as deep or quite as wide.

5. The Council's 2017 Supplementary Planning Document *Residential Extension Guidelines* (REG) aims to ensure that a balance is struck between protecting neighbours' interests, keeping a good quality and attractive street scene and meeting applicants' reasonable expectations for increased accommodation. The proposal includes new bamboo screens to the sides, to protect neighbours' privacy. These 1.8m high structures would cut out most views from the terrace to the rear windows, terraces and immediate rear garden areas of neighbouring properties. Although there would be still be some views of the lower sections of the gardens from the terrace, plus views from the centrally positioned steps, these would be within reasonable limits - noting that there is always some mutual overlooking within rows of houses like this. I therefore find that the proposal would not significantly affect neighbours' privacy so long as the screens are in place.
6. The REG states that single storey rear extensions to semi-detached houses should not normally go back more than 3.65m, to avoid unacceptable enclosure to neighbours. In this case, an existing single storey extension goes back that far already so the proposed decking and bamboo screens would go beyond the advised maximum depth. This guidance must, however, be looked at in relation to the circumstances of each case.
7. The proposed screens would be at about the same level as the ground floor rear windows of neighbouring houses. The screens would be no higher than a normal fence as seen from those windows and from the rear terrace at No 64. There would therefore be little impact on the outlook from the rear windows and terrace at the next door properties.
8. The main impact would be on the outlook from the much lower level back gardens of those properties. The existing ground floor level extension at No 66 already stretches well beyond the backs of Nos 64 and 68 and looms over their low level gardens at a substantial height. The proposed bamboo screens would add to that impact, creating a significantly deeper structure to the side of both gardens. Although the proposed decking would be reduced in depth and set in slightly from the boundaries in comparison to the existing decking, this would be insufficient to mitigate the impact on the outlook from Nos 64 and 68, which would be dominated by the imposing combined structure.
9. I note that there was another terrace here previously, before the existing terrace was built. I have not been shown any evidence of its planning authorisation though. I therefore give this limited weight in my decision.
10. I conclude that, although neighbours' privacy could be adequately protected, the effect on living conditions at Nos 64 and 68 would be unacceptable due to the impact on the outlook from their rear gardens. The proposal therefore conflicts with the aims of London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (HLP) Policies SC7 and CC2 and the REG, to protect amenity and avoid unacceptable loss of outlook.

Character and appearance

11. A number of other houses on this side of Parkwood Road also have decking or terraces at the back so that this proposal would not be out of character with the area. This would be a modest scale of development in comparison to the existing house, would not be visible at all from the street and would be a minor

feature in most other views, including those from the nearby rail line and school playing fields.

12. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character or the appearance of the house or the local area. It therefore accords in this respect with the aims of HLP Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 and the REG, to secure high quality design that maintains the character of the area.

Conclusion

13. I have considered all other matters raised. My findings on the first main issue are sufficiently compelling for me to conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR