



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 November 2021 by M Long

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/D/21/3280144

5 Beechdale, Southgate, London N21 3QE

- 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 Steve Lazouras against the decision of The London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 21/01714/HOU, dated 4 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a hip-to-gable loft conversion with main dormer, floor plan redesign and all associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. On 20 July 2021 the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). I have had regard to this as a material consideration however, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The issues most relevant to this appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
4. The appellant has referred to Policy GG2 of The London Plan, adopted March 2021, which was not referred to in the Officer's Report. This policy has been subsequently provided by the Council and has been considered as part of this recommendation.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site is a two-storey, semi-detached property with a hipped roof located on the southern side of Beechdale. It has existing single and two-storey

rear extensions, as well as a dormer in the rear roof slope. The appeal dwelling forms a pair with No 7 and there is a strong sense of symmetry established by their similar sizes and design. While there are some alterations that have eroded this level of symmetry, the properties broadly retain their original mirrored form. The surrounding residential area is largely comprised of semi-detached pairs, most of which retain their hipped roofs. There are a number of hip-to-gable extensions within the Beechdale streetscene that have resulted in unbalanced roof forms on semi-detached pairs, as well as a pair of dwellings at Nos 2 and 4 which have become rebalanced through corresponding hip-to-gable extensions. There are also a number of large rear dormer windows, some of which are visible from the rear of the appeal property.

7. The proposal is a hip-to-gable roof alteration that would incorporate roof lights in the front elevation and a large dormer window in the rear roof slope. The proposed dormer would cover a substantial width of the host dwelling and would be set down from the existing ridge line by a short distance.
8. While the proposed size of the dormer is similar to a number of developments in the surrounding vicinity, the first floor extension at the appeal dwelling has added a degree of complexity to the rear roof slope which would not suitably accommodate the proposed scheme. The overall scale of the proposed dormer would sit uncomfortably with the existing roof arrangement resulting in harm to the appearance of the host dwelling. Although views of the dormer would be very limited from the Beechdale streetscene, the proposal would be prominent from the surrounding properties due to its significant height.
9. The proposed hip-to-gable conversion would result in a significant unbalancing of the established mirrored roof form of the semi-detached pair and would erode the level of symmetry shared between the adjoining properties. The loss of the hipped roof on one side of the pair would feature incongruously within the Beechdale streetscene, where semi-detached pairs largely retain their hipped roofs. The proposed scheme would appear beyond that which would be considered acceptable incremental change in this context.
10. The appellant has directed my attention towards a number of roof extensions in the wider Beechdale streetscene, including hip-to-gable conversions at Nos 9, 41 and 44, which have unbalanced the roof forms of their respective semi-detached pair. Nevertheless, these examples are not so numerous that they form a significant part of the character of the area and so are not considered to provide a precedent for the proposed development at this site. Upon my visit to the area, I observed that Nos 2 and 4 had similarly undergone hip-to-gable conversions resulting in a rebalanced and symmetrical roof form. The appellant has suggested that implementing their scheme would allow for No 7 to similarly convert their roof form. However, there is no guarantee that the attached neighbour would implement an alike scheme, nor is there a mechanism within the appeal process to ensure that both dwellings are extended in a similar manner.
11. The appellant has suggested that an alternative scheme that would unbalance the roof form could be undertaken as permitted development. However, there is no evidence before me to indicate that such a scheme would be possible, and providing a determination of whether a scheme would constitute permitted development is not within the scope of this appeal decision.

12. Policy D1 of The London Plan is strategic in nature and primarily focuses on the preparation of local plans in each borough, rather than on the determination of small-scale individual planning applications. The relevant supporting text states that respecting the character of a place and accommodating change should not be mutually exclusive and that an appropriate balance between the existing fabric and any proposed change should be struck. Policy D3 is supportive of incremental change that would increase the intensification of development in an area. However, this change needs to be considered within the context of the overarching aims of The London Plan, which includes ensuring development responds to the existing character of a place. For the above reasons, the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to the overarching aims of these policies.
13. The appellant has referred to Policy GG2 which seeks to make the best use of land and optimise a site's capacity. The proposed scheme would make good use of the appeal property to increase its available living accommodation and, in this respect, would be compliant with some of the aims of this policy. Nevertheless, the proposal must be considered within the wider context of The London Plan and the Council's development plan documents. The lack of conflict identified against Policy GG2 would not outweigh the conflict with the broader aims of these documents to ensure development respects the local character and appearance of an area.
14. When considered in the round, in relation to this appeal, there is no substantive conflict between the policies in The London Plan 2021 and the development plan documents prepared by The London Borough of Enfield.
15. Given the above, the proposed scheme would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy CP30 of The Enfield Plan Core Strategy 2010-2025, adopted November 2010, which seeks to ensure all developments have special regard to their context. It would also be contrary to the Development Management Document, adopted November 2014, specifically Policy DMD13 which seeks to prevent roof extensions that disrupt the balance of a pair of properties; Policy DMD6 which seeks to ensure the scale and form of development is appropriate to the existing pattern of development; Policy DMD8 which seeks to ensure new residential development has an appropriate scale and massing; and Policy DMD37 which seeks to prevent development which fails to have appropriate regard to its surroundings. There would be further conflict with The London Plan, adopted March 2021, specifically Policy D3 which seeks to ensure development responds to the existing character of a place. The Council has mentioned conflict with Policy D8 in their reason for refusal, however this policy refers to direct impacts upon the public realm and does not appear relevant to small-scale development on an individual dwelling.

Other Matters

16. The appellant has stated that the proposed scheme would provide additional living space that would accommodate the needs of their family. However, this is a private benefit that would not outweigh the harm identified in respect of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan, when considered as a whole. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Long

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR