



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2021

by P. D. Biggers BSc Hons MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/21/3282358

27 Ravenscroft Avenue, Golders Green, London NW11 8BH.

- 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 Arey Reifer against the decision of the London Borough of Barnet Council.
 - The application Ref 21/1707/HSE, dated 26 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is roof extension including hip to gable, L-shaped rear dormer window with juliette balconies, 2 no. rooflights to front roof slope and 1 no. side gable window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for roof extension including hip to gable, L-shaped rear dormer window with juliette balconies, 2 no. rooflights to front roof slope and 1 no. side gable window at 27 Ravenscroft Avenue, Golders Green, London NW11 8BH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/1707/HSE, dated 26 March 2021 and subject to the following conditions.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun no later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of approval.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted documents and the following approved plans: 027RA-A-01-002; 027RA-A-02-101; 027RA-A-02-102; 027RA-A-03-101; 027RA-A-03-102; 027RA-A-03-103; 027RA-A-03-104; 027RA-A-05-101; 027RA-A-05-102; 027RA-A-06-101; 027RA-A-06-102; 027RA-A-06-103 and 027RA-A-06-104.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) Before the extension hereby permitted is first occupied the proposed window in the side gable elevation shall be obscure glazed and permanently retained as such and permanently fixed shut with only a fanlight opening.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development on the application form does not properly reflect all elements of the proposal. I have therefore taken the description of development as that set out in the decision notice and appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area of Ravenscroft Avenue.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located on the south east side of Ravenscroft Avenue which is characterised by a mix of large detached and semi-detached two storey properties finished in render under tiled, mainly hipped roofs.
5. Many of the properties in the vicinity of the appeal site have been extended at roof level. Whilst some of these extensions appear modest for example at Nos 23 and 25 with well-proportioned dormers, others have exceptionally large roof dormers and roof extensions. No 29 in particular (the semi-detached neighbour to the appeal property) was granted permission to extend with a hip to gable extension and large 'L' shaped dormer. Essentially the appeal proposal would replicate this pattern of roof extension on No 27. There are a number of elements to the roof extension proposed to No 27 and I will consider each in turn.
6. Regarding the front elevation to the Avenue two alterations are proposed – to extend the loft by changing the current hip roof to a gable end and the insertion of rooflights into the front roof slope.
7. In respect of the hip to gable extension whilst the original prevailing roof form in the Avenue is mainly one of hipped roofs there are a number of cases where, to accommodate loft extensions, the design of the roof has been changed. In particular, in respect of the semi-detached pair of houses at Nos 27 and 29, the roof at No 29 has already been altered from hip to gable and there is now an asymmetry between the 2 properties. In this context I am satisfied that the change from hip to gable roof on No 27 would help to rebalance the appearance of the two properties from the street and would be acceptable. The change to a gable also includes a proposed gable window to light the hallway and the stair at loft level in the appeal property. This would look out onto the side elevation of No 25 where there is a number of windows at first floor and a loft level dormer. Without the proposed side gable window being obscure glazed and fixed shut there would be unacceptable overlooking of neighbouring windows. However, the plans indicate this window would be obscure glazed and a condition could ensure that this could be enforced.
8. Turning to the matter of the rooflights, there are a considerable number of properties in the area with rooflights on front roof slopes to assist in lighting loft level accommodation and given the modest nature of the proposal on the front of No 27 their insertion would not be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the Avenue.
9. Regarding the proposed extension to the rear it has been put to me that the proposal would rebalance the semi-detached pair which currently has an asymmetrical unbalanced appearance as a result of the large 'L' shaped dormer on the rear of No 29. As this roof extension was approved by the Council the appellant considers that the similar extension to No 27 should also be acceptable.
10. I note that in the Council's case officer report in respect of the appeal proposal it is argued that, although No 29 was permitted, it has not been built entirely in accordance with the approved plans. Whilst this may be the case in respect of some details, particularly fenestration, the overall concept, massing and scale of

the 'L' shaped dormer that now exists was approved and the effect this has on the semi-detached pairing is therefore a material consideration.

11. The Council has produced the *Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) to assist householders in planning alterations to existing properties and states in respect of dormer roof extensions that they should be subordinate to the roof slope and extend only half the width and half the depth of the roof slope. Clearly the proposal does not meet the SPD's design objectives. I note that in response to this the Council invited the appellant to submit amended plans for a smaller dormer but the appellant chose not to do so.
12. Subsequent to submitting this appeal the appellant did make an application for a certificate of lawful development (Ref 21/3010/192). This proposed a dormer roof extension on the main roof of the property only without the section extending onto the rear two storey offshoot. This was granted as it was more compliant with the advice for dormers in the SPD. However, accommodating the full-width dormer proposed would involve removing the hipped roof to the rear offshoot and reroofing it with a crown roof which would be out of keeping with the roof pattern in the area. I am therefore not persuaded that this alternative dormer would be any more appropriate particularly considering Nos 27 and 29 as a pair.
13. Whilst the rear of No 27 containing the large dormer would not be readily visible from Ravenscroft Avenue itself, I do accept that the rear elevation would be plainly visible from Elmscroft Avenue and at a slightly further distance also from Beechcroft Avenue. However, from these viewpoints the current asymmetry of No 27 and 29 at roof level is very apparent and looks awkward and, whilst I accept that the proposed roof extension to No 27 would appear large and prominent, in the context of the semi-detached pairing the proposed dormer design is justified.
14. I have considered whether allowing the appeal proposal would simply compound what is already a set of extensions on No 29 that have subsumed the character of the original semi-detached pair. However, overall, I am satisfied that rebalancing the two properties would be the less worst option in terms of the character and appearance of the pairing and wider views of it than the alternative under Ref 21/3010/192 which would have a different form of dormer to that on No 29 and a new alien form of roof to the offshoot.
15. It would be hoped that, starting afresh on the two properties, a more sympathetic design to the rear elevation, more in line with policies and guidance could have been achieved but the permission on No 29 has in this case established a different context to that generally prevailing in the area. Thus, whilst there are many elements of the proposal that are not in conflict with the Development Plan policies for example optimising the site capacity which is encouraged in the *London Plan 2021* at Policy D3, the requirements of Policy D3-D1) in respect of form and layout are not wholly met. Similarly with Policy DM01 of the *Barnet Local Plan Development Management Policies* the majority of the policy criteria would be met but DM01b and the requirement to respect the appearance, scale, mass and pattern of buildings and streets would not be satisfactorily met. Equally, in respect of the *Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy* Policies CS1 and CS5 seeking the highest standard of urban design, the proposed development would be less than satisfactory.
16. The proposal would however respect the character and appearance from the frontage on Ravenscroft Avenue and whilst the rear roof extension would be large and dominant in inward views; for the reasons above, I am satisfied that the

appeal proposal should be allowed on the basis of what has already been permitted on the adjacent house and the rebalancing of the semi-detached pair.

17. For the avoidance of doubt, I am satisfied that this decision should not be taken as establishing a precedent. It is a partial departure from some criteria within the Development Plan policies and in particular the guidance of the SPD only as a result of the specific context and the current appearance of this semi-detached pair of properties which I consider to be a material consideration.

Conditions and Conclusion

18. The Council suggested a number of conditions. I have considered these in the light of the advice in the Framework and *Planning Practice Guidance*. A condition requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans is necessary in the interest of certainty. In addition, a condition requiring materials to match the existing dwelling is important in the interests of safeguarding the character of the area. The Council has not referred to it in the questionnaire but the case officer's report proposed that a condition was added to ensure that the proposed side gable window was obscure glazed and fixed shut. This is important to ensure no harm to living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in No 25 and as it was clearly set out in the case officer's report the condition will not be a surprise to the appellant and I do not therefore consider it necessary to consult on it.
19. I have considered the matters before me and, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed and permission granted for the roof extensions subject to the conditions set out above.

P. D. Biggers

INSPECTOR