

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2021

by Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5TH January 2022

Appeal Ref. APP/F5540/D/21/3285666
14 Lampton Avenue, Hounslow TW3 4EN

- 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 Parvinder Garcha against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application ref. 00674/14/P5, dated 28 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "*Hip-to-gable Loft conversion and rear dormer*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. In July 2021, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published, as referred to in the Council's Householder Report and the appellant's statement. This replaced the 2019 edition which is incorrectly mentioned on the Council's decision notice. Still, it is evident that the substance of the Framework, as it relates to the sole main issue in this case, has not changed.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and the wider street scene.

Reasons

4. Paired with no. 16, the appeal property is a semi-detached 2-storey house situated on the southern side of Lampton Avenue. There are 3 such semi-detached pairs found between Lampton Avenue's 2 junctions with Sutton Dene. Nos 14 and 16 comprise the pairing in the centre of this row. The surrounding area is residential in character.
 5. The pair of 2-storey semi-detached houses at nos 14 and 16 possess a distinctive built form. There is a hipped roof extended across at each property and a centrally placed and shared half-timbered advanced gable under which are 2-storey bays. Together these houses make a positive contribution to the street scene. Even though there is a slightly different arrangement to the
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extended hipped roof at no. 16, the symmetrical form and original character of nos 14 and 16 remain substantially intact. This consideration equally applies to the street scene as a whole. Whilst there are a few semi-detached houses (such as nos 4, 8 and 22 on the same even side of the avenue) where a hipped end roof has been changed into a gable end thereby unbalancing the appearance of each pair, the roofscape hereabouts displays a general uniformity with most properties retaining their original hipped roofs.

6. The Framework advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; so, development should add to the overall quality of the area and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and sympathetic to local character. I consider that the appeal proposal is ill-judged in these important respects.
7. The proposed hip-to-gable loft conversion would utilise matching external materials and follow the existing height of the property. Even so, it would add mass and volume to the existing roof in close proximity to the 2-storey flat-roofed side extension to no. 12, whilst it would have a ruinous effect on the broad symmetry displayed by the pair of houses at nos 14 and 16. The overall roof form across nos 14 and 16 would suddenly appear out of balance and incongruous. This part of the development proposal would therefore seriously detract from the front elevation of the host dwelling and its neighbour at no. 16 which can be clearly seen from various public vantage points along Lampton Avenue. Moreover, it would not relate positively to its wider context since it would have a disruptive visual effect upon this local street scene.
8. The rear dormer would have little impact on the public realm but it would be seen from the rear of several properties in this locality. Both horizontally and vertically, it would cover a significant proportion of the rear roof slope including the section that would come about from the hip-to-gable loft conversion. Being only marginally set away from the ridge, eaves and sides of the roof, the dormer would create the appearance of a large box, give the property a top-heavy appearance and be noticeably greater in size and scale than the only other rear dormer (at no. 10) in the row of houses between nos 10 and 20. The windows in the rear of the dormer would align with the first floor windows below but one of them would be notably wider than its counterpart below. This would add to the adverse visual impact of the rear dormer. I consider that the rear dormer would be out keeping with the form and scale of the host property and amount to an incongruous addition that would dominate its rear roof slope.
9. That the proposal disregards the design guidance in the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (SPD) confirms the decision I have reached in this case. The SPD explains that converting a hipped end to a gable end will normally be refused because it would unbalance the appearance of a house or a pair of semi-detached houses. Roof extensions that would be as wide as the house and create the appearance of a large box will also normally be refused. Furthermore, on larger semi-detached houses, like no. 14 in my view, the SPD expects a dormer to be set in by at least one metre from the ridge, eaves and sides of the roof.
10. I note the commentary from the parties about the 3 proposed front roof lights. However, the concerns expressed in the Householder Report were not

significant enough to feed into the decision notice itself and I see no need to comment on this matter further given the decision I have reached.

11. Viewed as a whole, I consider that the proposed development would not represent a visually attractive solution that would add to the overall quality of the area. The development would not be sufficiently respectful of or complementary to the original building's character, the local character and the general street scene. I therefore find on the main issue that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the wider street scene.
12. As the development would not be an example of high-quality design and would neither safeguard and enhance the qualities and character of this built environment nor involve the acceptable extension and alteration of a residential property given how far the scheme would depart from the Council's relevant design guidance, there would be conflict with the aims of Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 of the Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030.
13. There would not be compliance with the key design themes in the Framework insofar as they relate to achieving well-designed places.
14. The Council, correctly in my view, did not identify an excessive loss of amenity for neighbouring properties for any reason. The lack of harm in that regard does not outweigh the harm I have found under the main issue.
15. My finding on the main issue is decisive to the outcome of this appeal. There is conflict with the development plan. The harm cannot be mitigated by the imposition of planning conditions and it is not outweighed by other material considerations. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised and the absence of objections from local residents, I conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR