

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/L5810/D/21/3285422
42 Prospect Crescent, Twickenham TW2 7EA

- 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 & Mrs C & B Bullock against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
 - The application ref. 21/2411/HOT, dated 2 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "*Erection of first floor rear extension*".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. Notwithstanding the Council's Planning Report, the sole letter of objection in response to this application came from an occupier at 40 Prospect Crescent, not at no. 44.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposed extension upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and its immediate surroundings and upon the amenity and living conditions of the neighbours at 44 Prospect Crescent with regard to the potential for any visually intrusive or overbearing effects.

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a 2-storey house at the end of a short terrace of 4 such houses in an established residential crescent. It benefits from a flat-roofed single-storey rear extension. No. 44, the next terraced house in the same row to the south-east of no. 42, has a similar extension. Whilst the crescent does not possess any outstanding examples of urban architecture, it is nonetheless a pleasant residential area. There are a number of similar simply detailed short terraces around this part of the crescent.
 5. I have been referred to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document titled House Extensions and External Alterations 2015 (SPD). Amongst other things, this explains that 2-storey side and rear extensions should not be greater than half the width of the original building so as to ensure the extension does not over-dominate the building's original scale and character. The SPD is not policy
-

in itself but it carries weight as a material consideration in decision making. It should not be applied prescriptively to the exclusion of all other factors, including the physical circumstances and context of a site.

6. The proposed scheme would add substantial bulk and mass to the rear elevation of the host property which is clearly visible in views from the rear of several nearby residential properties. Although the first floor rear extension would be no deeper than the single-storey rear extension below, it would be 6m wide, considerably more than half the width of the original rear elevation. This is not a marginal case insofar as the SPD guidance is concerned. Given its size, it would appear unduly dominant and out of scale with the host dwelling and the neighbouring house at no. 44. When this extension is combined with the single-storey rear extension, very little of the original rear wall face would remain visible. The existence of the open garden space to the north-west associated with the semi-detached houses at nos 38 and 40 would make no material difference to how the extension is perceived.
7. The extension would have a lower roof line than the host building but this would only be possible because of the inclusion of a flat-topped or crown roof. Such a design would not match or harmonize with the roof of the existing property. Rather, it would appear contrived and architecturally ill-mannered with the aim of forcing the roof of the proposed extension below the existing main ridge. The extension would appear as an unsympathetic and insufficiently subservient addition to the existing dwelling and I can find no circumstances which would justify making an exception to the SPD guidance.
8. I noted the first floor flat-roofed extension at the rear of no. 48 at the opposite end of the same terrace. I also saw on my tour of the area the full height rear-projecting hipped wings of nos 41 and 47. I do not have any planning history about these cases and it is possible that they may pre-date the SPD. In any case, each application is considered on its own individual merits.
9. I find on the **first main issue** that the proposed extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and its immediate surroundings. As the development would have a scale, mass, bulk and design that would be disrespectful of and inappropriate to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surroundings, there would be conflict with the aims of Policy LP 1 of the Local Plan 2018. This policy requires all development to be of high architectural and urban design quality so that it respects, contributes to and enhances the local environment and character. There would also be a failure to adhere to the SPD and to the overarching design themes found within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Whitton and Heathfield Village Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document insofar as they relate to achieving well-designed places.
10. With regard to the second main issue, given the degree to which the proposed extension would be set away from the shared boundary with 44 Prospect Crescent, its limited depth and the presence of a notable amount of vegetation inside the boundary of no. 44, I consider that the proposed extension would not create an unacceptable sense of enclosure or appear visually intrusive or overbearing when seen from the neighbouring back garden and rear-facing rooms at no. 44. The experience of 44 Prospect Crescent as being set within a

good-sized back garden which faces south-west would endure. The absence of objections from the occupiers of this property adds weight to my findings in these respects.

11. I find on the **second main issue** that the proposed development would avoid any unacceptable impacts upon the amenity and living conditions of the neighbours at 44 Prospect Crescent, taking into account the potential for any visually intrusive or overbearing effects. As such, there would be no conflict with the aims of Local Plan Policy LP 8 or the SPD in this regard. Similarly, there would also be compliance with the Framework which seeks to ensure developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.
12. I should add that given the size of the back garden at no. 40, I would not expect the morning sunlight reaching the rear of this neighbouring property to be reduced to such an extent by the proposed extension as to create substandard lighting conditions for the occupiers there.

Conclusion

13. My finding on the first 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 my finding on the second main issue or by other material considerations, including the improved internal space for the family home that the scheme would provide.
14. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR