



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2022

by M Ollerenshaw BSc(Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/21/3281072

47A Radnor Road, Harrow HA1 1SA

- 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 Ramin Raei against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/1897/21, dated 5 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is alterations to roof to form end gable and rear dormer; installation of two rooflights in front roof slope and new window in gable end to enlarge 2 bedroom flat to 3 bedroom maisonette.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development as stated on the Council's decision notice, rather than that given on the application form, as this is more precise and includes all elements of the development proposed. The appellant raises no specific objection to that description, which they have subsequently used in their appeal statement.
3. On 20 July 2021, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. However, it does not materially alter the national policy approach in respect of the issues raised in this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, and whether the proposal would provide satisfactory internal living conditions for existing and future occupiers of the flat.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a first floor flat situated within a semi-detached two storey property on the eastern side of Radnor Road in a residential area. The property has a hipped roof with a two storey outrigger to the rear. The surrounding area comprises mainly two storey semi-detached properties which are generally set back from the road with small front gardens and larger, private rear gardens. The front elevations have a relatively uniform character arising from their consistent building lines and gaps between them, hipped or

gable roofs, bay windows and small front gables. The area therefore has a pleasant spacious and well-ordered appearance which contributes positively to its character.

6. The proposed dormer extension is intended to supplement other alterations to the property, most notably the hip to gable enlargement of the main roof. The Council has not indicated any specific objections with regard to the effect of these other elements of the scheme on the character and appearance of the area, and I have no reason to reach a different view.
7. The Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 (SPD) advises that dormer extensions should achieve visual containment within the roof slope, and that where there is a rearward projecting pitched roof the rear roof extension (or dormer) must leave a minimum of 500mm from the adjacent valley between the main and return roof slopes.
8. The dormer would be set in from both sides of the roof, including from the new gable end, and set back from, and above, the main eaves, and below the main ridge of the building. However, contrary to guidance in the SPD, the dormer would not be separated from the roof of the two storey rear outrigger but would extend part way over its ridge. This would create an awkward feature which would not be in-keeping with the host property or surrounding properties, which do not have dormers cutting into rear outriggers. Although the dormer would not be prominent from public vantage points, it would still be a very noticeable and incongruous feature when viewed from the rear garden of No 47 and from neighbouring properties and their rear gardens.
9. The appellant has referred to examples of other rear dormers in the surrounding area, including the one to the rear of No 45. However, the latter is a noticeably smaller dormer which does not project over the roof of the two storey rear outrigger. Although there are some large rear dormers in the wider area, based on the evidence before me I consider that they are not so numerous as to form a defining feature of the area. I also have limited details of the planning history of the examples referred to and so cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed rear dormer would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. As such, it would fail to comply with Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021), Policy CS1B of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies (2013) (DMP), the SPD and the Framework. These require, amongst other things, that development be of a high standard of design that responds to local context.

Living conditions

11. The proposed conversion and enlargement of the roofspace would provide an additional bedroom and shower room, which would be served by windows and a Juliet balcony. The Council accepts that the proposed three bedroom, five person flat would exceed the minimum gross internal area (GIA) required for this unit type. However, the Council's concern is that the ceiling height would be insufficient within the new living space.

12. With respect to floor to ceiling heights the 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' (March 2015) identifies a minimum height requirement of 2.3m for at least 75 per cent of the GIA. However, having regard to the unique heat island effect of London and the distinct density and flatted nature of most of its residential development, London Plan Policy D6 sets out a slightly more onerous minimum floor to ceiling height requirement of 2.5m for at least 75 per cent of the total GIA.
13. The submitted Proposed Section AA indicates a floor to ceiling height of approximately 2.376m for a significant proportion of the new living space. Whilst this would be slightly below the minimum floor to ceiling height set out in Policy D6 of the London Plan, and would also appear to be less than that available on the other floors of the property, it would be above the national standard. I consider that the floor to ceiling height within the new accommodation would be adequate and it would therefore provide acceptable internal living conditions for existing and future occupiers.
14. For these reasons, there would be no unacceptable conflict with Policy D6 of the London Plan, Policies DM1 and DM26 of the DMP, the Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (2016), the SPD and the Framework. These policies and guidance seek, amongst other things, to ensure that housing is of a high standard.

Other Matters

15. I appreciate that the proposal would provide enlarged accommodation for the appellant, but in the form proposed this would be at the expense of the character and appearance of the property and the surrounding area. Therefore, this consideration would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the development proposed would provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for occupants of the flat. However, I have also found that it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. As such, the proposal is contrary to the development plan as well as the Framework, and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Ollerenshaw

INSPECTOR