

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2022

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th March 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/N5090/D/21/3285452 Land at 58 Manor Road, Finchley, London N3 2SR

- 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 and Mrs L Poobalasigam against the decision of Barnet London Borough Council.
 - The application (reference 21/3000/HSE, dated 25 May 2021) was refused by notice dated 3 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. Number 58 Manor View lies within an established area of Finchley that is dominated by residential development, closely built up along the street frontages. It is located in a very prominent position, at the corner of Manor View and Rosemary Avenue, with number 56 Manor View adjoining the site to the south-west. This neighbouring house is one of a large semi-detached pair of houses (with number 54) that has previously been extended, notably by the construction of "box" dormers that give it a dominating appearance in the streetscene that does not enhance the area.
4. The original part of the existing house is a detached building with rendered external walls and a hipped roof. It has been extended in the past by the addition of a single-storey flat-roofed element that provides a large kitchen and family room, with folding glass doors that take up most of the rear elevation. The extension is faced in multi-hued grey brickwork and has a more contemporary appearance than the original building.

5. In addition, a substantial outbuilding has been constructed at the end of the back garden, described as a "granny annexe". This also has a flat roof and the walls are finished with a modern exterior cladding material. The garden area has been reduced, as a result, but is still of a reasonable size.
6. It is now proposed that the house itself should be further extended, by constructing a new first-floor addition at the rear, above part of the existing ground floor extension.
7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history (while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change).
8. An emphasis on the importance of good design is also to be found in the Development Plan, for example at Policy D4 of 'The London Plan' as well as in local planning policies.
9. Policy CS1 of 'Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy)', dated September 2012, is a general Policy that includes the aim of creating an attractive environment, while Policy CS5 is more directly focussed on achieving "high quality places". Policy DM01 of 'Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies)', also dated September 2012, provides more specific criteria, aimed at achieving high quality design.
10. Attention has also been drawn to the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents, entitled 'Residential Design Guidance' and 'Sustainable Design and Construction', both dated October 2016. Both of these address relevant design criteria and considerations, although they do not have the same force as Policies in the Development Plan.
11. The proposed development would add significantly to the size of the two existing bedrooms at the rear of the first floor of the property. The new extension would be constructed above the existing flat roof of the ground floor kitchen and family room (the previous extension), projecting three metres from the existing main wall at first floor level. The new roof would incorporate a pitched element, extending the side slopes of the existing hipped roof, but this would be truncated in form, with a flat roof completing the design. The external walls (including those of the earlier single storey extension) would be finished with painted render, to match the original part of the house.
12. The existing building is undistinguished architecturally but it is in keeping with the historic character of the surroundings and it makes a more positive contribution to the streetscene than the adjoining building at number 56, for example. A well-designed scheme needed not be ruled out in principle but, in this case, the proposed extension would be awkward in form, adding an ungainly and incongruous addition to the existing structure. The hybrid roof shape would not be in harmony with the surroundings and the bulk and incongruity of the extension would be unsympathetic to the surroundings. As a whole, when finished, the extended side elevation would be intrusive and unattractive in views along Rosemary Avenue, on a prominent corner site.

13. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed development would make a useful addition to the existing house. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the character and appearance of the existing house and to the streetscene outweighs the benefits of the project. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed.
14. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR