



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2022

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/21/3289520

10 Honister Gardens, Stanmore, HA7 2EH

- 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 Sanjay Swaminarayan against the decision of the London Borough of Harrow Council.
 - The application Ref P/2583/21 dated 22 June 2021 was refused by notice dated 5 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is single and two storey side extension; single and two storey rear extension; part conversion of garage to habitable space; external alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as I feel it more concisely describes the development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and immediate area.

Reasons

4. There are several elements to the appeal proposal. The Council's delegated report confirms that they find the single and first floor rear extension, and first floor side extension, to be acceptable. I have no evidence before me to conclude differently on these elements. The decision notice confirms that the refusal reason is based upon the single storey side extension only. For the avoidance of doubt the appeal will focus upon this element.
5. The appeal site is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling constructed of brick with the existing roof being tiled and hipped. The host dwelling has an existing single storey garage side extension. The appeal site is wedge shaped which is a contrast to the generally more regular plot sizes which are characteristic of the area as can be seen from the submitted location plan. At the time of my site visit I noted that the appeal property, due to it being forward of the building line of, and at an angle to, 8 Honister Gardens, is already prominent within the streetscene due to the visibility particularly on the approach from the junction with Honister Place. I find that the combination of these facts makes the appeal site more sensitive to change due to its highly visible location and unusual plot shape next to 8 Honister Gardens.

6. The streetscene for Honister Gardens is characterised by semi-detached properties which have setbacks from the front boundaries which the Council state are generally in the region of 6- 7 metres. This was noted as part of my site visit and I note that the appeal site is already less than this, in part, being less than 5 metres from the front boundary at its closest point. The existing side extension already takes the host dwelling closer to the boundary; however, good side space is maintained as shown within 1099-01-02 Rev A.
7. At the time of my site visit I noted that the existing space is partly fenced off behind a roadside hedge. I find that the current spacing between the boundary of the host property and 8 Honister Gardens, as well as the remaining space off the front boundary, are both of importance to avoid a sense of overdevelopment but also to soften the contrasting orientations of the neighbouring properties which respond to the bend in the road. I find the space assists with the transition between 8 Honister Gardens and the linear row that the appeal site is at the end of to the East. The proposed single storey side extension would extend the host dwelling closer to the boundary. It would project forward of the building which would not integrate well with the existing character of the area due to the generally linear pattern of development as a result of proximity to the front and side boundaries.
8. It should be kept clearly in mind that appearance is the outward, visible qualities whereas character is the sum of all the qualities which distinguish an area. I find the proposal would present as an awkward form of development which would not respond well to the existing local character in terms of development pattern. Visually, as a result of the site characteristics I have outlined above, I find the proposal would present as visually dominating and disruptive as a result of the width and projection closer to the front and side boundaries within the appeal site. Whilst I note that the appeal property is already forward of 8 Honister Gardens I find the positioning would exacerbate this relationship visually resulting in what would appear to be a sharp corner of the proposal projecting forward within the streetscene.
9. The appellant states that many properties have single storey side elements that project forward of the immediate neighbour. At the time of my site visit I parked in Honister Close and saw some of the examples for which photographs have been submitted. I know these, however, I do not find any of them to be comparable to the appeal site in terms of the plot shape and relationship with the neighbouring property which are the matters I find result in the proposal being visually prominent and uncharacteristic within this case before me. The examples provided follow the front building lines and do not disrupt the linear pattern of development which I do not find is the case for the appeal proposal. Each case must be considered on its own merits. The appellant notes the staggered siting of the appeal site in comparison to 8 Honister Gardens and that its relationship is more pronounced than many other properties on the road. I do not, however, find the proposal would result in a simple continuation of the pattern of extension activity as asserted.
10. The proposal would be contrary to Harrow Core Strategy 2012 Policy CS1 (B) which requires development to respond positively to the design, density and spacing of an area and Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013 Policy DM1 which requires design and layout to have regard to the location, appearance, pattern of development and space around buildings.

11. The proposal would also be contrary to London Plan 2021 Policy D3 which requires form and layout to respond to layout, orientation, appearance and shape with due regard to existing street forms and proportions and the overarching objections of section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which seeks to ensure developments add to the overall quality of the area and by sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

12. The Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 is noted, with regard to residential extensions, to require them to harmonise with the scale of the original building. The proposed single storey side extension would, cumulatively with the existing side extension, result in a ground floor extension which essentially doubles the width of the host dwelling. I do note examples of similar levels of development at 6 Honister Gardens. In that regard the proposal would not be entirely uncharacteristic with regard to impact upon the host dwelling itself if viewed in isolation. This does not, however change my findings as to the impact of the proposal on the immediate area as a result of the overall site characteristics outlined. The first floor side extension is noted as subordinate and has not been an element upon which the refusal reason is based.
13. I note third party comments which were submitted in response to this application. I have dealt with matters relating to overdevelopment and character with the area within this decision letter. The appellant has submitted an updated flood risk assessment revision A which was considered by drainage officers to provide satisfactory information subject to conditions required completion in accordance with the submitted detail.
14. I also note comment regarding overlooking, potential use of flat roofs as terraces and impact upon light in relation to 8 Honister Gardens. The Council consider the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the amenity of neighbours, subject to a condition for obscured glazing and opening levels for the first floor area window with regard to 8 Honister Gardens. Furthermore I note the proposal does not interrupt the 45-degree line and I have no evidence before me to conclude that the proposal would unacceptably impact upon light levels to 8 Honister Gardens. Had I found the proposal acceptable, conditions could have been placed upon any permission granted to control the use of flat roofs as appropriate.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR