



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/21/3286272

50 Gatehill Road, Northwood HA6 3QP

- 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 Kotecha against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 18347/APP/2021/3064 dated 10 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is Front extension; part single; part two-storey front extension; first floor rear extension and replacement/new doors and windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed from that stated on the planning form. Notwithstanding this, I have used the description as used on the Council's decision notice as this more accurately describes the proposal as shown on the plans and I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and that of the area which is within the Gate Hill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character (ASLC).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a large detached dwelling located on Gatehill Road, a private residential road which forms part of the wider Gate Hill Farm Estate. Travelling through the area, the character is one of a quiet residential road with space and dwellings set in large plots. The area is characterised by wide streets, with a variety of dwellings varying in age but with a number displaying characteristics of Arts and Crafts construction. Dwellings have hipped roofs, some with gable features and often varying rooflines. The appeal site appears to employ some of these features, including the use of varied rooflines and a gable, traditional materials, tall chimneys and some traditional style windows. The dwelling appears to have benefitted from some alterations and extensions, with the side gable extension and garage being constructed from brighter brick.

5. The appeal site is set in a slightly elevated position above the road, with a sloping driveway and parking area to the frontage. The land slopes away from the house, with its neighbour at no. 48 to the south appearing slightly lower, and the neighbour to the north at no. 52 being at a higher level. The garage and first floor gable, and a link element to the main house are set at lower levels than the ridgeline of the existing dwelling.
6. The development would introduce a porch extension and forward extension to the garage, including an extended single-pitched roof to sit below the first floor window level. The existing front chimney would be removed to provide an extension to the central element, which would bring this flush with the existing gable feature to the front elevation, including the removal of the existing small bay window to the ground floor and other alterations to windows to this elevation.
7. Together with the forward extension of the garage and, and the extension to the existing infill element of the house, the proposed extensions to the front would represent a significant and bulky increase in built form, with the proposed new roof being set above the existing gable, although marginally lower than the existing ridge line of the main house. The loss of the chimney and bay window, whilst not significant, are regrettable and the proposed development would contribute to the overall bulky and dominant additions to the dwelling. Given the elevated position of the dwelling, I consider that the bulk of the extensions to the front would draw the eye and represent an incongruous feature in the overall streetscene, resulting in a loss of the original character which contributes to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the ASLC. These changes would be exacerbated as seen from the street given the location of the dwelling above the street level.
8. I accept that many dwellings in the local area have been subject to varying alterations, some of which have been significant. I was also able to see at my site visit that there are also other plots within the local area which benefit from garage buildings forward of the principal elevation, however these are in general harmony with each other in terms of their layout, character and appearance and do not know the specific details for these developments. I was able to see at my site visit the varying specific site circumstances for many of the properties throughout the estate. There are no other properties to Gatehill Road that have a similar front extension to that which is being proposed. I have had regard to the layouts and alterations of other sites in the locality however was able to see that the nearby properties have fairly well defined and uniform frontages along this side of Gatehill Road, none of which have elements protruding beyond the principal elevation.
9. To provide the first floor extensions to the rear, the existing recessed windows and canopy would be replaced with a continuous hipped roof extension. The rear chimney would also be removed. This extension would result in a significant extension, and whilst not set above the ridgeline of the original roof, it would be visible above the existing gable to the front as described above. Whilst not all visible from the street, this would result in a wide and dominant addition which would be at odds with the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the local area.
10. Consequently I find that the proposed extensions would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the ASLC and the host dwelling and therefore

would be contrary to Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Local Plan¹ and Policies DMHD 1, DMHB 1, DHMB 5, DMHB 6, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Local Plan Part 2², which require extensions to (amongst other things) be of high quality design and not cause any adverse cumulative impact on the character, appearance or quality of the existing street or wider area including undesignated heritage assets. Developments in an ASLC should reflect the character of the area and its original layout and extensions should be subservient to the original building. The proposed extension would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) which requires that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

11. The appellant has cited other extensions to properties in the locality in support of their argument. However, the recently approved extension at no. 21 Gatehill Road is for a dwelling which is orientated in a different manner to the appeal site on its plot. The appellant also refers to no. 38 Gatehill Road, which has been extended over the years. Nonetheless, I was unable to see any significant and bulky additions or extensions forward of the front elevation. The appellant also points to the neighbour at no. 48 Gatehill Road, which has permission to increase the footprint of the original house. I have limited information about the histories of these developments but their contexts differ to that of the scheme before me, and so they merit only limited weight and do not lead me to a different view in this case.

Other Matters

12. I am unable to address any claims relating to the Council making their decision without a site visit. Nonetheless, I have made my decision on the basis of the evidence before me, including my own site visit.
13. The appellant has confirmed that the proposed development would provide a dwelling for the whole family including access arrangements for older family members. Whilst I have given the appellant's personal circumstances careful consideration, I am mindful that the harm identified would be permanent and is not outweighed by the appellants' particular circumstances. For these reasons, I therefore find that this factor is not sufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused contrary to the Local Plan and the Framework.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the appeal should be dismissed.

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR

¹ Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (November 2012)

² Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (January 2020)