



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2022

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6TH May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/U5930/D/22/3292623

1 College Gardens, Chingford, London, E4 7LQ

- 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 Colin McDermott against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Waltham Forest.
 - The application Ref 212474, dated 29 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as a 'first floor side extension, garage conversion, hip roof extension, dormer conversion and internal reconfiguration to a detached property'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The Council's decision describes the proposal as 'Demolition of existing garage, construction of part single and part two storey side extension, construction of a single storey rear extension, creation of a hipped roof with rear dormer and installation of 4 front roof lights, and the construction of a front porch incorporating projecting canopy roof in front of existing side extension window'. It is clear from the plans that this describes the proposal more accurately and I have therefore considered the appeal on this basis.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policies CS2 and CS15 in the Waltham Forest Local Plan Core Strategy (2012) and policies DM4 and DM29 in the Waltham Forest Local Plan Development Management Policies document (2013) which together seek to ensure that development is of a high quality design that recognises local distinctiveness, relates to the original host building and retains traditional features.
4. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling which occupies a prominent corner position within a residential area of mainly semi-detached houses built during the inter-war period with hipped roofs, projecting bays and mock-Tudor detailing. Whilst many have been altered or extended, some traditional features remain and these contribute strongly to the area's attractive suburban character.

5. This dwelling has been extended but was built with a square plan form and is unusual in that it was built with a roof which is hipped on one side but has a gable on its other, more prominent side elevation, resulting in an asymmetrical form. The gable end has a chimney with double breasts in an arched shape and this is seen prominently in the approach downhill from both College Gardens and Mount Echo Road. Although the appellant considers that the property is idiosyncratic and looks out of place, its distinctive gable end was clearly designed to reflect both the mock-Tudor style of the area and its prominent corner location. As such, I find that despite the dwelling's lack of symmetry, it contributes positively to the character and appearance of the street scene.
6. The proposed development would extend the dwelling on its gable end and would result in a symmetrical, rectangular plan form with a main hipped roof across the width of the dwelling, with roof lights in the front roofslope and a dormer in the rear roofslope. It includes a two storey side extension which would replace an existing double garage on the gable end and would have an additional single storey wraparound element linked to a rear extension which would have a flat roof and lantern-style rooflights. The Council has not raised any objection to the proposed rooflights or to the rear extension and on the basis of what I have seen, I would agree that those elements would be acceptable.
7. The creation of a symmetrical form would be acceptable if it could be achieved without distorting the scale and proportions of the dwelling or the erosion of important features. The removal of the attached flat roofed double garage on the gable end and the flat roof across the existing two storey extension to the other side of the dwelling would improve its appearance but there are a number of aspects to this scheme that are not acceptable.
8. The loss of the distinctive and prominent chimney breast would remove an important feature of the dwelling and a small circular, stained glass window in the side elevation, typical of many in the area, would also be lost. The two large windows in the side elevation of the proposed two storey side extension would not reflect the greater solid to void proportions that are generally seen in the side elevations of dwellings of this period.
9. Although the proposal would create a symmetrical form, its siting and scale would result in the existing projecting bay becoming the central feature of the front elevation which is not typical of detached houses of this style and period. The large single window at ground floor level in the front elevation of that extension would also be disproportionate and would not reflect the more traditional solid to void ratio of this and the surrounding dwellings. The removal of the existing inset arched front entrance and its replacement by a small timber porch with a flat canopy would result in the loss of an attractive traditional feature which is also seen in the adjacent dwelling at no 3 and some of the other dwellings on this side of the road. Whilst other timber porches with canopy roofs are seen in dwellings on the opposite side of the road, those are dwellings of a different style to this one. As such, the proposal would erode some of the dwelling's most important traditional features and would result in incongruous front and side elevations which would be uncharacteristic of this style of dwelling and the area.

10. The rear roof slope is seen clearly from Mount Echo Drive. The proposed rear dormer, by reason of its width, which is almost the same as that of the main ridge, would appear overly dominant in relation to the dwelling when seen from there. I have noted that there are other examples of large dormers in the area but this is a highly visible location and the proposed dormer would therefore have a harmful impact on both the dwelling and the street scene.
11. Whilst the proposal would introduce a much greater degree of symmetry to the form of the dwelling and there are other dwellings of a similar size and scale in the wider area, those matters are outweighed by the loss of important traditional features and the uncharacteristic detail of the design.
12. The proposal would provide more space for the appellant and his family but as the Council has indicated that a suitable design could be achieved, I give this matter limited weight and am not persuaded that this is the only option or that the family's need for additional space outweighs the significant, wider public harm that would be caused by this proposal.
13. For the reasons stated above, I conclude that the proposed development, by reason of the siting, scale and design of the two storey side extension and the erosion of important traditional features, the design of the front porch and canopy roof and the size and scale of the rear dormer, would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. As such, it would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to earlier and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this conflict. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector