
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2022

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/22/3292382

19 The Grove, RADLETT, WD7 7NF

- 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 Miss Johanna Quinn against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/1876/HSE, dated 13 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a part side/part front two storey infill extension with gabled roof, part front/part rear single storey pitched roof infill extension and insertion of 3no. rooflights to existing roof slope, rear extension at first floor with gabled roof and 2no dormers and insertion of 2no. rooflights, and demolition of existing detached garage and replacement with new detached outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Radlett North Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. No 19 is a detached house sited on a moderate-sized plot within a small estate of houses known as The Grove. It occupies a corner position at the point where the access road splits to form a rectangular road around the estate. In addition to the main house, the property includes a detached garage at the rear, eastern edge of the site. The proposal would involve the demolition of this garage and its replacement with an outbuilding of not dissimilar scale. The Council has indicated that it has no significant concerns with this element of the scheme, and I concur with this view. Accordingly, my consideration will concentrate on the proposed alterations to the main house itself.
4. Policy SP1 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS) indicates that development should be of high quality design and appropriate in scale, appearance and function to the local context, taking advantage of opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area. Policy CS14 indicates that all development proposals must conserve or enhance the historic environment of the Borough. Development proposals should be sensitively designed to a high quality and not cause harm to identified locations of heritage value including Conservation

Areas. Policy CS22 indicates that development proposals should take advantage of opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and conserve the Borough's historic environment.

5. Policy SADM29 of the Council's Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADM) indicates that the Council will not permit development proposals which fail to protect, conserve or, where possible, enhance the significance, character and appearance of a heritage asset and its setting. The scale, design, use and character of the proposal will be taken into account. Policy SADM30 indicates that development should make a positive contribution to the built environment; recognise and complement the particular local character of the area in which it is located; and result in a high quality design. In order to achieve a high quality design, a development must, amongst other things, respect, enhance or improve the visual amenity of the area by virtue of its scale, mass, bulk, and height.
6. Policy HD3 of the Radlett Design Code (RDC) states that development proposals are required to reflect and respond positively to local townscape.
7. The Council contends that the proposal, by virtue of its scale and design, would result in an incongruous addition to the existing dwelling, which fails to respect its character and appearance.
8. The appellant contends that the proposed extensions are of a high quality design, and are in keeping with the pattern, character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, they have been designed to provide a suitable home the appellant's family needs, while taking full account of the local CA. Finally, she contends that The Grove is varied in design, scale and appearance, with many of the houses being extended (including large crown roof extensions to number 7, 8 and 17), or rebuilt in their entirety.
9. The Grove is characterised by large detached or semi-detached dwellings on moderate to large plots. The road layout is formal, although the appearance of the estate is softened by extensive mature landscaping. At the entrance to the estate there is a high degree of symmetry in the buildings forming the prevailing street scene at this point. Nos 1 and 20, opposite to one another, have a similar appearance in their main front elevations. This pairing is matched with Nos 2 and 19 on their respective corner plots, and the two pairs of almost identical semi-detached houses (Nos 21/22 and 24/25) opposite.
10. The appeal property has a largely symmetrical appearance when viewed from the road, with a large central front gable and windows aligned regularly to each side. There are small, single-storey extensions to each side of the main house, both of which are set back from the main front elevation. The proposed development would involve projections to the front and rear of the southern side extension, which would bring the front and rear elevations into line with those of the main house. On the northern side, the small extension would be replaced by a much larger, two-storey extension, projecting forward to a point level with the main front elevation, and having a large front gable. The northern side extension would also involve extending at first floor level at the rear of the house, such that the existing single cat-slide roof would be replaced by a complex twin-pitched roof connected by a flat-roofed element.
11. The appellant contends that the principal side extension has been designed to be sympathetic to the existing building scale, and that it remains subservient to

the front gable and proportionally balanced to that of the existing home. However, this two-storey side extension would result in a large front-gable element that would significantly unbalance the front elevation of the house, and would appear as a somewhat dominant feature, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the existing host property. In the context of the surrounding street scene, where there is a high degree of symmetry to be seen in the appearance of the pairs of houses around the entrance to The Grove, the proposal would be harmful to the street scene.

12. The appellant notes the existence of other dwellings in The Grove that have been extended. I have few details of the nature or exact scale of these extensions in relation to the original dwellings, but I note that in the case of No 2, it would appear that the extension to this property, which has a similar front elevation to that of the appeal property, the side extension is set well back behind the main front elevation, such that it appears subservient to the main house, and is not an over-dominant feature. This helps to preserve the degree of symmetry around this part of the estate.
13. The appellant also notes that the extensions as proposed would result in only a 6% increase in footprint and a 16% increase in floorspace. Whilst the increase in footprint is small, the overall effect on the bulk of the property of the two-storey side extension, together with the resultant imbalance in the visual appearance of the front elevation, would be harmful to the overall character and appearance of the host property, this part of The Grove, and therefore the CA as a whole.
14. The proposals would also involve the creation of a somewhat complex and incongruous twin-roof design to the northern side, with a flat-roofed connection. Whilst this would not be readily evident in the street scene, it would fail to respond positively to the existing character and appearance of the house.
15. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extensions to No 19 The Grove would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and to the immediately surrounding townscape in this part of the CA, albeit that harm would be less than substantial. I note the comments of the appellant that the extensions would result in improvements to the internal scale and layout of the house, and I have sympathy with these views, but these do not represent public benefits to outweigh the harm, as required by Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy framework.
16. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and would conflict with Policies SP1, CS14 and CS22 of the CS; Policies SADM29 and SADM30 of the SADM; and Policy HP3 of the RDG, and I dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR