The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2022

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21ST June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/W/21/3292598
5 Harrow Lane, Maidenhead, SL6 7PD

- 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 Muhammad Azam against the decision of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- The application Ref 21/03109, dated 10 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2021.
- The development proposed is described as a two storey side extension and part single/part two storey rear extension following demolition of existing element.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. It is noted that the Reasons for Refusal in the Council's Decision Notice cited Saved Policy DG1 and HG14 of the Borough Local Plan (BLP). During the appeal process, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 2013-2033 (LP) was adopted on 8 February 2022 which supersedes the policies of the BLP. The Council have suppled copies of LP Policies QP1 and QP3 which this decision is to be assessed against and have commented that this change in policy does not change any of the elements of the reasons for refusal[1]. That said, I have therefore made my decision on this basis and have only referred to the adopted policies of the LP in this decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located along Harrow Lane, a residential road that is part of a larger estate of Ellington Park that appears to have been developed in the early to mid-twentieth century. Harrow Lane contains pairs of semi-detached dwellings with a functional design that have been laid out in a formal speculative housing development which maintains the same designs with two storey construction, hipped roof forms with large central coaxial chimney stacks. The dwellings along Harrow Lane have been laid out in a regimented fashion with the same setbacks from front and side boundaries and gaps in between dwellings enabling glimpses to the tops of trees behind. These details along with vegetated front gardens assists in creating positive elements which

[1] Letter to the Planning Inspectorate from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Dated 1 March 2022

reflect the qualities of character, appearance and local distinctiveness for this particular location. Whilst there is evidence of extensions and alterations seen throughout the estate, they are generally subservient to the main dwelling and retain the positive characteristics which contribute to local distinctiveness.

5. The appeal site is one of the original characteristic semi-detached dwellings constructed as part of the residential estate in a functional design. Unfortunately, the front garden has been removed for vehicular parking, but maintains its symmetrical appearance and regimented setbacks within the street scene. Whilst the existing side chimney stack has been removed, and a front porch erected, the extension is generally subservient to the original component of the dwelling.

6. In undertaking extensions to existing buildings, LP Policies QP1 and QP3 seeks that development fosters high quality design and a sense of place, with particular regard given to urban grain, layouts, rhythm, scale, bulk, and massing, amongst others. The Borough Wide Design Guide (BWDG) supports these policies and gives further specific guidance in relation to design principles and detailed considerations where for extensions there is an emphasis on subservience and responding to the existing site and context of the locality.

7. The proposed extension would elongate the existing ridge a further 1 metre an mimic the existing pitch with the two storey element not being setback from the front façade or the ridge. The extension would continue past the rear elevation and create a two storey wing to the rear with a lower hipped roof and ridge to the two storey rear wing that takes up the majority of the rear façade. The space remaining between the proposed rear wing and the shared boundary would then have a two storey infill extension with flat roof leading onto a lean-to roof of a single storey component.

8. Whilst the BWDG places an emphasis on subservience, the proposed side and rear extensions would wrap around the existing dwelling and subsume the building rather than be subservient to it. The lack of setback from the ridge and front façade would mean that the dwelling would mimic the same details as existing and the additional width would unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings and remove the important visual gap in between the properties which is seen as a positive characteristic in the street scene.

9. Turning to rear extension, the proposed infill component with flat roof does not maintain the same eave level, and the additional lean-to roof of the single storey alongside the hipped roof of the rear extension would overcomplicate the functional design and be like nothing else surrounding. I note reference in the Appellant's Statement of Case that other dwellings surrounding such as No.27 Harrow Lane have similar wrap around extensions. Whilst no details as to the considerations of this scheme have been forwarded in the appeal for comparison, this dwelling appears to have only extended the ground floor leaving a visual gap at first floor as opposed to the appeal proposal which has a sheer two storey wall to the side without setback.

10. I acknowledge that there are two storey extensions to existing dwellings as illustrated in Appendix 1 of the appellant's statement, however these are all to the sides of the dwellings and subservient in their form and appearance. Neither of the extensions shown are without the setbacks of the extension to the dwelling or overcomplicate and present a massing or visual bulk towards the dwelling's design in a similar way to the proposal at the appeal site. As

such these examples to not add justification for the appropriateness of the appeal proposal. The rear wing is also hipped leading into a single storey lean-to roof that follows similar lines of the hipped roof. This is not the same as the appeal proposal which introduces different roof forms which has an overcomplicated appearance to the rear. Taking this into account, I am not persuaded that the approval at No.27 has similarities to the appeal scheme.

11. In conclusion of this matter, the proposed extensions would be clearly disproportionate and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, and the local distinctiveness of the locality. The proposed scheme would therefore be contrary to LP policies QP1 and QP3, which are supported by the BWDG as described previously.

Other Matters

12. I note comments from an interested party with regards to loss of light, main drainage pipe accessibility, noise and disturbance during construction and highway safety. The council has assessed the scheme as being appropriate in terms of living conditions and highway safety and I have no reason or additional evidence which would result in me disagreeing with this assessment. Access to drainage is not a planning matter and construction noise if granted could adequately be controlled via conditions placed on the permission.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers
INSPECTOR