



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 May 2022

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/22/3298244
23 Vernon Drive, STANMORE, HA7 2BP

- 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 E Noxha against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/0220/22, dated 24 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 21 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a first-floor side and rear extension.
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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 side and rear extension on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the neighbouring properties in the locality along Vernon Drive.

Reasons

3. No 23 is a semi-detached house situated on the northern side of Vernon Drive. The houses on this side of the road are set well above road level and, as a result, are prominent in the street scene. The property currently has a long single-storey side extension that wraps around the rear of the house to create a deep, full-width ground-floor extension. This is significantly larger at the rear than shown on the submitted existing ground-floor plan. There is a small roof-terrace area with balustrade around part of the flat roof of the rear extension, and there is a hip-to-gable roof extension with a full-width rear roof dormer.
4. The proposed development would involve the construction of a side extension at first-floor level. The extension would be set back some 2 metres from the front elevation of the house and would extend a little under 3 metres beyond the rear elevation of the house. The extension would have a hipped roof.
5. Policy CS1 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS) indicates that new development should protect the character of Harrow's suburbs. Policy DM1 of the Council's Development Management Policies document (DMP) indicates that all development must achieve a high standard of design and layout. The assessment of this should have regard to the massing, bulk, scale and height of proposed buildings in relation to the location and the surroundings; the appearance of proposed buildings, including detailing and roof form; and the context provided by neighbouring buildings and the local character.

6. The Harrow Residential Design Guide (SPD) includes guidance for Householder Development. This indicates that extensions should represent an additional volume subordinate to, and reflecting, the character of the original house, or a simple extension of the existing building form. In addition, an extension should have a sense of proportion and balance, both in its own right and in its relationship to the original building and should not dominate the original building, whilst roof design is very important because this will determine the overall shape of the extension. All roofs should be designed to reflect the character of the dwelling house and those adjoining to provide a satisfactory appearance.
7. With specific regard to side extensions, the SPD indicates that they should reflect the pattern of development in the street scene. The visual impact of side extensions, particularly first-floor and two-storey, will be assessed against the pattern of development in the immediate locality. Moreover, where the property has already been extended by the conversion of a hipped to a gabled roof, a further side extension (first-floor or two-storey) is inappropriate.
8. The Council contends that the proposed first-floor side extension, in conjunction with the existing hip-to-gable roof conversion, by reason of its poor and incompatible design, would give rise to an unsympathetic, incongruous, bulky and obtrusive form of development which would fail to respect the character, composition and design of the host dwelling and neighbouring properties and would significantly detract from the established and prevailing pattern of development in the area, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the subject dwellinghouse and the street scene.
9. The appellant contends that the proposal would not be over-dominant and bulky, and that it would have no impact on amenities of adjoining occupants. In addition, the roof would be subordinate to the main dwelling and well set back from the front elevation, while the rear projection would be smaller than the neighbouring property at No 27 Vernon Drive. Finally, the appellant contends that there are examples of previous planning consents in the area for extensions of similar construction.
10. The appeal property has already been significantly extended over its original form and footprint. This has included a hip-to-gable roof extension and large rear dormer. The proposed side/rear extension would add to the scale and massing of the house, although the effect of this in the street scene would be ameliorated to some extent by the set-back nature of the first-floor side element.
11. The juxtaposition of the new hip-to-gable conversion with the proposed hipped roof of the side extension would appear as an incongruous feature, both in relation to the host property and the immediate locality along this part of Vernon Drive. The addition of the side extension to the existing combination of extensions at the house would represent an increase in volume that would not be subordinate to, or reflect, the character of the original house, nor would it be a simple extension of the building form.
12. With regard to the extensions at No 27, the side/rear extension appears as a continuation of a pre-existing hipped-roof element, and that the rear dormer is both smaller than that at the appeal property and also contained within the original rear roof slope of the house. It is, therefore, not a precedent for the current appeal proposal.

13. I note that there are a number of first-floor side extensions at properties along Vernon Drive. I have no details as to the background to these extensions, but many of these appear to be original features, or small extensions to such features, while the small number of hip-to-gable conversions appear to be added to houses which already had hipped roof side extensions as part of the original design. In any case, I consider that the proposal for No 23 would be inappropriate in the context of the property, and harmful to the character and appearance of both the host property and the surrounding area.
14. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension, by virtue of the resulting incongruous juxtaposition between its hipped roof and the recent hip-to-gable conversion, along with the increase in scale and massing when taken in conjunction with earlier extensions, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the neighbouring properties in the locality along Vernon Drive. On this basis, it would not represent high-quality design and it would conflict with Policy CS1 of the CS, Policy DM1 of the DMP, and guidance on Household Extensions given in the SPD. Accordingly, I dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR