



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28TH June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/22/3295845

53 Suffolk Road, Harrow HA2 7QF

- 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 Nahyan Godil against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/4469/21, dated 3 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension incorporating a porch; a single and two storey side to rear extension; a single storey rear extension; alterations and extension to the roof; a rear dormer; rooflights in the front and both side roofslopes; external steps at the rear; an extension of the hardsurfacing at the front; and external alterations (demolition of attached garage).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of the proposal from the appeal form, which is consistent with the decision notice.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

4. The Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 ('SPD') states that extensions should harmonise with the scale and architectural style of the original building and with the character of the area. It notes at paragraph 6.35 that front extensions can disrupt the harmony and architectural coherence of the streetscape, and that there is a need to ensure a clear separation from features such as bay windows. It continues at paragraph 6.45 that the space around buildings is important to avoid a 'terracing' effect.
5. The style and form of the host property is typical of this part of Suffolk Road. The houses here are detached, and laid out in regular rows, which are set back a similar distance from the highway. Mostly they retain a significant gap above ground floor level to the neighbouring house, often as a result of a recessed garage or habitable space.

6. Notwithstanding some alterations and extensions, their form and siting, along with common design features, such as prominent gables or hipped roofed projections with curved double storey bay windows, recessed porticos, and brick and render facing materials, ensure an attractive sense of rhythm and cohesion in the streetscene.
7. The proposed side extension would abut the boundary with No 55, leaving only a very narrow gap, formed by that property's side passage, between the double storey sections of these two buildings. As a result, from many viewpoints along the road, these houses would appear semi-detached, and thus contrary to the prevailing form and grain of development.
8. At ground floor, the scheme's front face would align with the corner wall on the host's gable. It would thus step well forward of the original recessed portico. As a result, the ground floor front face of the host would have limited articulation, the dominance of the locally distinctive bay window would be much reduced, and the characteristic recessed front portico would be entirely subsumed.
9. Whilst the proposed first floor would be set further back than the ground floor extension, it would have the same eaves height as the host and its roof would be only slightly lower. Given the siting, width and scale of the proposed side extension it would dominate the original house, whose style and character would be much eroded. Although the scheme would include some appropriate design features such as a cat-slide roof and an arched doorway, for the above reasons the resultant dwelling would appear out of place, and it would significantly harm the streetscene.
10. The appellant has directed me to various properties in the road which have been extended. Whilst some of these include elements which are similar to this scheme, I observed few if any instances where the combined impact is comparable to that proposed here.
11. For instance, the front faces of the side sections of Nos 58 and 88 on the opposite side of the road are recessed well back from those properties' bay windows at both ground and first floor and, as pointed out in the Council's letter dated 17 September 2021, their flanks are set in from the side boundary at first floor level.
12. I observed that No 68 virtually opposite this site, has a recently permitted front and side extension which is level with the host's principal front face at ground floor. However, whilst that dwelling has no gap to the boundary with No 70, part of its first floor front face is set well back and it is more articulated at that level than this scheme. This assists in limiting any 'terracing' effect.
13. In any event these, and other isolated examples, do not change my conclusions regarding the harm that this scheme would cause to the area's prevailing character.
14. In general terms, Policy D3 Parts D1) and D11) of The London Plan 2021, Policy CS1 Part B of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012, and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies 2013, require proposals to be of a high design standard, to respect the host building, and to respond to local distinctiveness and character having regard to matters such as patterns of development, layout, form, appearance and scale.

15. As the scheme would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area, it would conflict with those policies, and with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework for good design which is sympathetic to local character and which maintains a strong sense of place. It would also fail to accord with the advice in the SPD.
16. Finally, whilst the appellant refers briefly to what could be undertaken utilising permitted development rights, I do not have details or drawings of any such 'fallback' scheme before me, and I have considered this proposal on its planning merits.
17. Having regard to all other matters raised, including representations by interested parties, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR