
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3290251
449 Chertsey Road, Twickenham TW2 6LS

- 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 Leila Amin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 21/1820/HOT, dated 19 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2-storey rear and side extension, proposed materials matching existing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The main parties describe the proposal as in the above heading, which is taken from the application form lodged with the Council. However, from my inspection of the plans, the development sought includes the erection of a part 2-storey, part single storey extension at the side and rear of the appeal dwelling. I have assessed the proposal on that basis.
3. A 2-storey side and rear extension at 451 Chertsey Road, which is attached to No 449, is the subject of a separate appeal¹ and is also before me to determine. The appellant owns both properties and states that the extensions would be carried out together if planning permission for them were to be granted. Given the similarity in the issues raised by these proposals, I have assessed the development sought individually and in combination with the proposed scheme at No 451.

Main issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host building and the local area; and on
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of 451 Chertsey Road, with particular regard to light and visual impact.

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3290252

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal dwelling is one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings with hipped roofs within a predominantly residential area within which 2-storey buildings predominate. Along Chertsey Road in the vicinity of the site, I saw that some buildings differ to others in their style and general appearance and that several properties have been externally altered and extended. Consequently, there is some variety to the existing built form in the street scene and the local area to which No 449 belongs.
6. The proposed extension would be 'L' shaped, wrapping around the side and rear of the existing dwelling with external materials to match those of the host building. It would be a sizeable addition. Once complete, the enlarged dwelling would extend across the full width of the plot. In doing so, the new addition would comfortably exceed the maximum threshold for extensions of this type set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *House Extensions and External Alterations* (SPD). The SPD advises that 2-storey side and rear extensions should be no more than half the width of the original building. The purpose of applying this guideline is to ensure that the extension does not over-dominate the building's original scale and character. The proposed 2-storey side addition would also be longer than the host building.
7. Against that background, I consider that the proposal would be a disproportionate addition even taking into account the built form and site coverage of the existing garage and the ground floor rear projection that would be removed. In other words, a 2-storey extension that would be wider at the rear and longer at the side than the main house would be so large that its intrinsic character would be spoiled.
8. With an extended 2-storey front elevation stretching across most of the width of the plot and limited space beyond one side of the completed dwelling, the site would appear overdeveloped when seen from the road. For the same reason, the appeal scheme would appear cramped in terms of layout within the street scene even among the varied built form within it and the irregular spacing between properties along Staines Road. In reaching this opinion, I have had regard to the proposed set back from the main front wall.
9. The sense of overdevelopment of the site would be even more pronounced if No 451 were to be extended, as proposed. This is because the 2-storey front façade of the finished building in that case would also span most of the width of its plot. When viewed together, the proposed changes to both Nos 449 and 451 would be on a scale that would unduly compromise the form of the pair and have a deleterious effect on the character and qualities of the local area.
10. On the first main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development, taken individually and in combination with the scheme at No 451, would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. As such, it is contrary to Policy LP1 of the Council's Local Plan (LP). This policy seeks to ensure that development achieves a high design quality so that it respects, contributes to, and enhances the local environment and character. It is also at odds with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which aim to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and adds to the overall quality of the area.

Living conditions

11. The proposed rear extension would be up to and parallel with the shared boundary with No 451. In this position, the new flank wall would be evident from the external area at the back of No 451 and some of its rear facing windows. Because this element of the appeal scheme would be just to the north of the rear of No 451, there would be no appreciable loss of natural light. In reaching this opinion, I note the Council's view that the new rear extension would fail the '45-degree test', which means that it would project beyond an imaginary line drawn at that angle from the nearest rear window of No 451.
12. The upper section of the new flank wall would be visible in oblique views from the first-floor rear window of No 451 nearest to the site, although the new built form would be modest in depth. The ground floor rear window of No 451 closest to the shared boundary with No 449 would be unaffected. The main direction of outlook from these and other rear windows of No 451 would largely remain across the back garden of this neighbouring property. When viewed from the rear outdoor space of No 451, the proposal would be seen with the more substantive host building beyond. Taking into account all of these points, I find that the presence of the proposal, while evident, would not be so great as to overbear or feel oppressive to the occupiers of this adjacent dwelling.
13. If the side and rear extensions at Nos 449 and 451 were to be carried out as a single development project, as proposed, the rear elevations of the completed dwellings would follow the same alignment. On that basis, the affected rear first floor window of No 451 would no longer be in place and so the proposal would not affect the light reaching to or the external view from it.
14. On the second main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 451. As such, it does not conflict with LP Policy LP8 or the Council's SPD insofar as they aim to safeguard residential amenity. My favourable finding on this matter does not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified in relation to the first main issue.

Other matters

15. Reference is made to a 6m deep single storey rear extension approved under application reference 21/1312/PDE. As it is described in the Officer's report and shown on the proposed layout drawing, this extension differs to the proposal before me notably in height, scale and position. As there are few direct parallels to be drawn between the approved extension and the proposal, I attach no more than very limited weight to it in support of the appeal.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR