The Planning Inspectorate

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: 7TH July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3297579
58 Strathearn Avenue, Twickenham TW2 6JX

- 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 Mansi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
- The application Ref 21/4129/HOT, dated 1 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2022.
- The development proposed is the erection of a side extension; proposed pitched roof replacing flat roof above existing.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a side extension; proposed pitched roof replacing flat roof above existing at 58 Strathearn Avenue, Twickenham TW2 6JX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/4129/HOT, dated 1 December 2021, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Procedural matter

2. The Council and several interested parties raise concern about the accuracy and clarity of the submitted drawings, notably in relation to discrepancies between the proposed elevations and roof plan and how the internal space denoted 'rooms' within the enlarged dwelling would be used. I have taken these matters into account in my assessment of the proposed development, which is based on all the evidence before me and an inspection of the site and its surroundings. On that basis, I am satisfied that the details of the appeal scheme as shown on the plans and detailed in the written evidence allow a reasonable assessment of the development sought.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached 2-storey dwelling that occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of Ryecroft Avenue and Strathearn Avenue within a predominantly residential area. It falls within Sub Area 1 of Character Area 9 as defined in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) *Whitton and Heathfield Village Planning Guidance*. This SPD describes this area as composed of inter-war housing and mainly comprising 2-storey semi-detached

dwellings of similar design with gardens. From what I saw, most dwellings close to the site typically occupy rectangular plots and are often sited parallel to the road. As a detached house at an offset angle to the highway within an irregular shaped corner plot, No 58 is an exception to this general layout.

5. I observed that several buildings near to the site have been externally altered and extended and that some include sizeable side and high-level additions. As such, there is some variety to the size and appearance of the existing built form within the street scene and the local area to which the site belongs.

6. With the new 2-storey side extension in place, the appeal dwelling would be significantly larger than the existing house with noticeably wider 2-storey front and rear elevations. The new pitched roof over the existing 2-storey flat roof element would also introduce additional bulk in an elevated position. The effect of this new roof would be to visually accentuate the overall scale and mass of the 2-storey building especially when seen from Strathearn Avenue.

7. Nevertheless, the appeal scheme has been carefully designed to reflect the style of the host building. The staggered front build line and the varied roof lines would visually 'break up' the scale and bulk of the finished building. The proposed set back of the new 2-storey addition from the main front wall and the offset angle of the dwelling to Strathearn Avenue would do likewise. This 'set back arrangement' would be in accordance with the advice within the Council's SPD, *Whitton and Heathfield Village Planning Guidance.* The new pitched roof over the existing flat roof element would be modest in scale. It would also be set back from and below the apex of the main front gable, which would mark it as a subservient element to the host building.

8. Importantly, the double height front bay below the forward projecting gable, which are among the distinctive features of the existing building, would remain prominent features of the host property. Consequently, the original form of the host building would remain legible with the new built form in place. In other words, no significant disharmony would result because the proposal would be subordinate to, and blend in with, the host building in accordance with the advice in the Council's SPD, *House Extensions and External Alterations*.

9. Removal of part of the existing flat roof would improve the building's appearance when seen from the road by removing a discordant feature. The new pitched roof would also introduce greater homogeneity to the roof form across the dwelling. Matching external materials would be used and the window openings, as proposed, would be in keeping with the pattern of fenestration in the host building. For all these reasons, No 58, as proposed to be extended, would have an acceptable appearance. The dwelling would have been significantly changed on all sides. However, the finished building would not appear ill proportioned, squat, unduly horizontal, nor would its character be spoilt if the appeal scheme were to come forward.

10. The additional built form would cause No 58 to gain some prominence when seen from the adjacent highways. Even so, the finished dwelling would stand comfortably within the plot, which is larger and a different shape to others in the locality. There would also be a reasonable gap between the new 2-storey flank wall and the site's boundary with Ryecroft Avenue. As a result, adequate space around the completed dwelling and a good-sized garden would remain with the proposal in place. This arrangement would ensure that a sense of space is kept around the adjacent junction and within the street scene.

11. I saw that several other residential properties in the vicinity of the site have had larger and more visible extensions without detriment to the quality of the streetscape. As such, and despite the extended 2-storey elevations of the completed building, the proposal would not look out of place, nor would it be obtrusive among the varied built form that is a feature of the local area.

12. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, it does not conflict with Policy LP 1 of the Council's Local Plan or the Council's SPDs, *Design Quality, House Extensions and External Alterations* or the *Whitton Heath Village Planning Guidance*. Collectively, this policy and guidance seek to ensure that development achieves a high design quality and respects, contributes to, and enhances the local environment and character. It also complies with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, which aim to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and adds to the overall quality of the area.

Other matters

13. The Council raises no objection to the proposal on security, parking, traffic or highway safety grounds. Having considered all the evidence, I see no reason to reach a different opinion on these matters. Although no new electric vehicle charging points are shown on the drawings, the planning polices before me do not require that such facilities are installed as part of a development scheme.

14. Several interested parties are understandably concerned about the use of the property especially if planning permission were to be granted. The application forms lodged with the Council sought planning permission for works or an extension to a dwelling. Like the Council, I have assessed the proposal on that basis. If the appeal property were to be used for other purposes, such as a business, hotel or as a house in multiple occupation, as suggested by several parties, a separate planning permission is likely to be required. Any such application would be considered on its own merits at that time.

15. Objectors also refer to the disturbance that is caused by lights left on inside the existing building, the antisocial behaviour of some people and from the activation of the house alarm, particularly at night. However, these are matters that are covered by other legislation.

Conditions

16. In addition to the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to impose a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, a condition is imposed to require that the external materials match those of the existing building.

17. A condition is also required to ensure that the provisions of the Fire Safety Strategy (FSS) plan are carried out for the health and safety of future occupiers. The Officer's report notes that in this case an FSS is a requirement of Policy D12 of the London Plan. A condition that limits the use of the flat roof is necessary to safeguard the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby properties. These conditions reflect those suggested by the Council, with minor amendments, where necessary, for clarity and precision.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs P101, P201, P202, P203, P204 and P205.
3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, including those used in any works of making good, shall match those used in the existing building.
4) The flat roof of the building shall not be used for any purpose other than as a means of escape in emergency or to maintain the building.
5) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing number F204 entitled Proposed Ground Floor and First Floor Plan Fire Safety Strategy and shall be permanently retained thereafter.