The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2022

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/22/3297642
1 Robin Lane, Hendon, London, NW4 1EU

- 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 Mrs Mojgan Nassab Rabiee against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
- The application Ref 22/0151/RCU, dated 12 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2022.
- The development proposed is alterations to loft front dormer.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations to loft front dormer at 1 Robin Lane, Hendon, London, NW4 1EU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/0151/RCU, dated 12 January 2022.

Preliminary Matter

2. At the time of my site visit the alterations to the front dormer had already taken place and the proposal is therefore retrospective.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling which adjoins Nos 72 and 74 Holders Hill Drive. The host dwelling has a single storey extension with roof terrace to the front and a dormer extension across the rear elevation.

5. The extended front dormer is well set down from the ridge of the existing dwelling and sits around 0.34 metres up from the eaves. It is set in about 0.40m from the side wall with the adjoining dwelling in Holders Hill Drive and by about 0.49m from the other flank wall.

6. The Council's Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2016) (SPD) advises, among other things, that dormers on the front of semi-detached or terraced houses will not generally be acceptable, due to their unbalancing effect on adjoining houses and the general street scene. Dormer roof extensions should normally be subordinate features of the roof.

7. Whilst the dormer is set down from the ridge of the dwelling, it is, due to its overall width and depth extending almost to the eaves, a relatively dominant feature of the roof. It is however, viewed in context with the large front extension and associated railings and roof terrace which is a highly dominant feature of the dwelling. Given the depth of the front extension and the overall height of the railings, I consider that these features are more visually dominant that the extended roof dormer.

8. The proposed front dormer whilst wide, does nontheless sit relatively comfortably on the front roof slope of the dwelling due to its significant set down from the ridge and the flank elevations. The dormer is mainly finished in cladding and blends satisfactorily with the roof material of the host dwelling. I therefore conclude that the dormer does not materially harm the character or appearance of the host dwelling.

9. The adjoining dwellings, Nos 72 and 74 Holders Hill Drive, are of a contrasting design to the appeal property. No 72 has a large side dormer which faces Robin Lane. A further dormer on its rear elevation also has a side window facing Robin Lane. The dormer on the side elevation of No 72 is significantly forward of the front dormer on the appeal property and consequently, is more dominant in the street scene than the appeal proposal.

10. I am satisfied that the appeal proposal does not result in any unbalancing with Nos 72 and 74 as these properties are already of a different design and appearance. Furthermore, many of the dwellings along Robin Lane, including the adjacent dwelling, have front roof dormers, of varying size, scale, design and materials, including several that dominate the roof slope. Front roof dormers are clearly a characteristic of the existing street scene and I also noted on my site visit that the rear dormers on dwellings in Holders Hill Avenue are also visually prominent from Robin Lane. Given the surrounding context, in my view the appeal proposal would not appear out of keeping with the street scene.

11. Despite some conflict with the design guidance within the SPD, I conclude that the proposal would not have a materially harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it complies with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document 2012, Policy DM01 of the Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies seek to ensure that, amongst other matters, new development is of a high quality design that respects the appearance, scale, height and mass of surrounding buildings and respects local context and distinctive local character.

Other Matter

12. I am satisfied that the appeal proposal does not result in additional material harm to the living conditions of the occupants of dwellings in Holders Hill Avenue due to the separation distances involved and intervening features. Moreover, the appeal proposal involved alterations to an existing dormer window which also faced the rear gardens of houses in Holders Hill Avenue.

Conditions

13. It is not necessary to impose any conditions as the development has already been carried out.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR