



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2022

by K Williams MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/22/3299797

23A Radnor Avenue, Harrow HA1 1SB

- 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 Ms Michelle Whitely against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/4411/21, dated 3 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2021.
 - The development is a proposed loft extension to flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and whether appropriate living conditions would be provided for future occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a first floor 1-bedroom flat within a two-storey semi-detached dwelling, set amongst a row of similar style and aged properties along Radnor Avenue. The regular hipped roof patterns and spaces between neighbouring properties present an attractive consistent character from the street. There are only a few examples of hip to gable extensions, and occasional rear dormer windows are evident at the rear of properties, seen in the glimpses between buildings, accessways and from rear gardens.
4. The rear dormer window would almost span the full width of the host dwelling. It would project across the original roof, and proposed hip to gable extension as well as interrupting the traditional small two-storey gabled rear outrigger. Although the overall height would be unaffected extending the large flat roofed rear dormer across these elements would result in it subsuming the form of the original rear roof scape. Due to its scale, bulk and design it would fail to respect the proportions and features of the original property, competing with the outrigger and would be set close from the gable end. The proposal would not therefore comply with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guide 2010 (SPD) in respect of the siting of the dormer from the edge of the gable.

5. I acknowledge the rear of the appeal building is not overly visible from outside of the site, and I could see the presence of other rear dormers on other properties within the immediate area. However, I cannot be certain these are the same width, or those host dwellings have the same features as this appeal proposal because no specific examples have been provided. Nevertheless, the proposed dormer, whilst partly obscured from Radnor Avenue and public areas, would still be particularly visible from neighbouring properties and gardens. I therefore find that, due to the size, and position of the rear dormer it would be dominating, incongruous and visually detrimental to the external features and proportions of the host building and therefore the area.
6. The appeal proposal also involves the creation of a gable end. This change in the roof form would remove a characteristic feature of the area and would diminish the contribution of the generally consistent, distinctive and attractive roofscape which positively contribute to the character of Radnor Avenue. The gable end examples I have seen, did not form the prevailing character of the area.
7. I acknowledge that the appeal site is not within a conservation area, nor would it affect any heritage assets. However, the traditional spacing and roofscape afforded by the hipped roofs are locally distinctive and largely intact, particularly on semi-detached properties. The proposed hip to gable roof would also erode the space between properties and affect the rhythm of development as a result of the additional bulk it would create. Whilst it would not create a terracing effect, as there would be some space retained between properties, nonetheless it would affect the spatial quality of the area. As such, the appeal proposal as a whole would not complement the original dwelling, prevailing character or reflect the guidance within the SPD which highlights that the roof form of a house is a significant part of the character of an area.
8. Consequently, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and thus conflicts with Policy CS1 of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012 (CS) and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies adopted 2013 (DMP) and Policy D3 of The London Plan 2021 (LP) The proposal would also be contrary to design aspirations within the Council's SPD and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) which seek to ensure development are sympathetic to local character and maintain a strong sense of place.

Living Conditions

9. The appeal proposal would increase the accommodation from a 1-bedroom home to a two-storey/duplex 4-bedroom home. Policy DM26 of the DMP sets out a requirement for development to comply with the minimum space standards within the LP, as does the Council's SPD. However, Policy DM26 of the DMP applies to conversions, and the space standards set out in table 3.1 of the LP Policy D6 applies to new build, conversions and change of use. Whilst the appeal proposal does involve an element of adapting an unused loft space, it comprises an existing home. Therefore, the requirements of DMP Policy DM26 and the space standards set out in table 3.1 which accompany Policy D6 of the LP are not applicable in this case, as the appeal proposal does not fall to be assessed against them. For the same reasons the Mayor of London Supplementary Planning Guidance 2016 (Mayor of London SPG) would not

apply to this extension to an existing home nor does the Council's SPD guidance on internal layout for extensions.

10. Irrespective of the precise amount of floor space, overall, I find the proposed accommodation to be generally limited in size for the number of bedrooms provided, leading to a cramped environment. There may well be garden space for residents to the rear and I do not agree that the outlook or daylight from the rooflights would be inadequate, as they are reasonably sized in relation to the room they serve. However, the internal layout and amount of space would be insufficient, for a 4-bedroom home. This would particularly be in respect of the kitchen and living room, which would be small and inflexible for the living room and dining space for a 4-bedroom home, and this is indicative of the confined nature of the accommodation overall.
11. Whilst Building regulations deal with requirements for useable spaces, there is no evidence before me that the appeal proposal would fulfil these requirements, nor does it obviate my assessment against the development plan. The lack of space across the appeal proposal overall would result in inadequate living conditions for future occupants in respect of space and layout.
12. For the above reasons although there would be no conflict with DMP Policy DM26, the Mayor of London SPG or the Council's SPD, I find conflict with DMP Policy DM1 and LP Policy D3 insofar as they seek to achieve a high standard of design and layout and in relation to the needs of future occupiers to achieve an indoor environment that is comfortable and inviting for people to use. These policies align with Paragraph 130 of the Framework which also require that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

13. If I were to have allowed the appeal, I am satisfied that amended conditions could have been imposed to make the appeal proposal acceptable in respect of refuse and cycle storage. I also have no evidence that garden space would not be acceptable. There are no further implications raised in respect of parking, highway safety or flood risk. I note that the Council has also not found harm to living conditions of neighbouring residents, and I do not see a reason to disagree on this and the above matters. However, these matters and the absence of harm are a neutral factor in my decision.
14. The proposal for a 4-bed home would widen the choice of family homes, however, for the reasons given above I do not find the level of accommodation would be adequate for such a use. The appeal drawings do not show the architectural features of the decorative ridge tiles, and whilst these could be conditioned, they would not overcome the alteration to the roof form which I have found would be harmful.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict.

16. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

K Williams

INSPECTOR