
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/22/3307246
7 Sidmouth Avenue, Isleworth TW7 4DW

- 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 and Mrs Rusby against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01020/7/P2, dated 3 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposal is primarily to erect a single storey hipped roof extension mainly at the rear of the appeal property, which is a 2-storey end terrace house that occupies a corner plot on Sidmouth Avenue within a predominantly residential area. The existing conservatory would be demolished and removed to make way for the new addition. No 7 is not a listed building. The site does not fall within a conservation area or a designated area of special character.
4. The proposal would extend across almost the full width of the plot and therefore exceed the width of the main house. It would also wrap around a rear corner of the host building and connect with the existing ground floor side projection, which extends the full length of the main house. This arrangement would be at odds with the advice in the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (REG). Section 4.4 of the REG states that "any wrap around proposal that connects a side extension to a rear extension on a corner plot will be refused". That said, the preface to the REG makes clear that each proposal must still be assessed on its own merits, not least because local circumstances often vary from one property to another.
5. The proposal makes efficient use of the space available within the plot and the hipped roof of the new extension would be consistent with that of the main house. However, the appeal scheme would significantly widen and lengthen the built form of No 7, enlarge its footprint, and noticeably add to its scale and mass. It could not reasonably be described as a subordinate addition, which is

expected of residential extensions under Policy SC7 of the Council's Local Plan 2015-2030 (LP). To my mind, the new development would appear overly wide and out of balance with the overall scale and proportions of the host building. By failing to respect the scale and built form of the dwelling, the proposed extension would stand uncomfortably at the rear and side of No 7 and detract from its character and appearance even with the use of external materials to match the existing building.

6. Views of the new addition from public vantage points would be limited given its position at the back of the house and partly screened by the boundary fence that marks part of the site's highway frontage. The proposed extension would also be set just below the adjacent footway due to the slight difference in local ground levels. Nevertheless, the new extension would still be visible from short sections of road close to the site. From these public vantage points, the completed dwelling would still draw the eye because the rear extension, as proposed, and the ground floor side projection would appear uncharacteristically large and long with the new built form in place.
7. I saw several examples in the local area where rear and side extensions have been added to properties, including those to which the appellants have referred and provided photographs with some background details. In my judgment, these examples have blended into the local area and respected their host building with varying degrees of success. They serve to illustrate that such changes can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of that building and the local area to which it belongs. In some instances, the examples exemplify the harm to which I have referred and so do not lend support to the appellants case. Having walked the entire length of Sidmouth Avenue, Crawford Close and other streets, it is my view that properties with single storey elements that are both longer and wider than the main house, as would be the result here, is not a strong characteristic of the local area.
8. The appellants state that the Council would find a rear extension with a depth like that of the proposal acceptable and so the key issue is the effect of a fairly modest corner section that links with the existing side projection. Whether or not that is the case, the wrap around feature, as proposed, ensures that the ground floor side and rear projections visually 'read' as a single entity. This arrangement would be obtrusive in the local street scene and a discordant feature in the local area.
9. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. As such, it conflicts with LP Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 and the guidance within the REG. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development complements the original building and maintains the character of the general street scene.
10. Once complete, the proposal would provide additional accommodation and enable the existing living space to be remodeled and insulated so that it better meets the needs of the appellants into the future. I note that the conservatory to be removed has no heating or insulation and that its condition and appearance are both deteriorating. Others raise no objection. A good-sized garden would remain with the new built form in place, and I agree that the living conditions of neighbours would not be harmed if the appeal scheme were

to come forward. However, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

11. I note the intention of the appellants to progress a sizeable rear extension under the neighbour consultation scheme if this appeal were to be dismissed, which they consider to be larger than the proposal with worse effects for the local area and others. However, the opportunity to pursue an alternative scheme through the exercise of permitted development rights is insufficient reason to allow unacceptable development.
12. The appellants are critical of the Council's assessment of the proposal and consider its decision to withhold planning permission to be very subjective and arbitrary. Matters relating to character and appearance are inevitably subjective. Opinion will vary, which is evident in the exchange of emails between the appellants and the Council that is appended to the grounds of appeal. Having carefully assessed the proposal in the light of all the submitted evidence and viewed the site and its surroundings I share the Council's concerns for the reasons given.

Conclusion

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

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR