



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2023

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/22/3309910
91 Pasture Road, Wembley HA0 3JW

- 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 Barbara Corrado against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 22/2137, dated 13 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as a first floor side extension of 4.8m with a rear dormer loft window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Sudbury Court Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in respect of development affecting conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance. The National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') sets out that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, such as conservation areas, and that harm to their significance requires clear and convincing justification.
4. Policy BHC1 of the Brent Local Plan 2019-2041 (2022) ('BLP') is consistent with that approach. It states that proposals shall sustain or enhance the significance of heritage assets and contribute to local distinctiveness having regard to matters such as the streetscene, and good quality, subordinate design.
5. The Sudbury Court Conservation Area ('the SCCA') is broadly characterised by two storey semi-detached and detached houses of varied typology, which are set back from the highway often behind front gardens and verges. These characteristics, together with some repetitive design themes and fine architectural detailing, provide an attractive sense of rhythm and cohesion to the streetscene.

6. The Sudbury Court Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2006 ('CACA') highlights the importance of corner properties as they face the junction, giving a formal, open quality to the crossings.
7. To ensure subordinacy, the Sudbury Court Conservation Area Design Guide 2015 ('SCDG') advises that the first floor of two storey side extensions should be set back 1.5 metres from the host's front wall, and that their width should be no more than 3.5 metres. It states that a two storey extension to a semi-detached house shall consider the symmetry of the pair; and that on corner plots, large or bulky extensions are not generally acceptable as they may draw attention to themselves and detract from the appearance of the area.
8. The host property and 10 The Crescent ('No 10') form a two storey semi-detached pair, which has a principally hipped roof with a notable overhang at the eaves. Along with a scattering of other dwellings in the SCCA, the CACA describes them as being in a stripped down, white rendered, Moderne style, enlivened by apple green pantiles. Although the host's single storey side extension is wider than the one at No 10, and it has a different roof form, the pair are nonetheless well-balanced. The building's form, proportions, distinctive style and materials contribute to the significance of the SCCA.
9. The proposed first floor extension would match the host's style, materials, and design detailing. However, at around 4.8 metres wide, its front face would not be substantially shorter than the original property, and it would be significantly wider than advised in the SCDG. With reference to an email dated 26 April 2019, it would also be around 0.8 metre longer than officers said was the most that they could support.
10. Given the extension's proportions, whilst its front face would be set back in accordance with the SCDG, and its ridge would be set down, it would have a considerable scale and bulk, and it would not appear entirely subordinate to the host. The resultant property would have a contrived, overly elongated and horizontal form.
11. Additionally, given that No 10 has a single storey side extension, the scheme's form and the proportions of its first floor window, would unbalance this semi-detached pair. Consequently, contrary to the stance in the Heritage Statement, in my view the scheme would not enhance the building's current proportions.
12. In reaching that conclusion, I note that the roof of the existing side extension has a false pitch, but the section of flat roof behind is not prominent in the streetscene, and that extension's form and appearance is not significantly out of keeping. Whilst, at the time of my visit, its partial covering with plastic sheeting did give it an incomplete and unsightly appearance, this scheme is not the only way in which that adverse impact could be addressed.
13. There would be no long distance views of the proposal, but in this location around the junction of three roads, the harm that it would cause would be very apparent in the streetscene, particularly looking up at the front face of the building from The Crescent. Neither the submitted 3D Visuals, nor the Visual Impact Assessment in the Heritage Statement, assuage my concerns. In harming this prominent, highly distinctive building in this part of the SCCA, the scheme would harm the designated heritage asset as a whole.

14. I have considered the site's planning history, notably the most recently dismissed appeal for a first floor extension (APP/T5150/D/3256620). However, compared to it, based on that decision letter and these submitted drawings, this extension's front face would be a barely perceptible 0.17 metre shorter. Whilst the roof overhang has also been reduced, for the reasons above, the scheme would still unbalance this semi-detached pair and it would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the SCCA.
15. I do not have the full details of all the side extensions referred to by the appellant in her statement. However, some are on properties of a different style to this one, some are clearly narrower, some are a little way from this site and, according to the Council, some pre-date the SCCA designation.
16. With regards the nearby side extensions in this part of the streetscene, from my observations and the evidence at Appendices L and P of the appellant's statement, the one on the moderne style house at 118 Paxford Road, and the one at 60 Pasture Road, both have a front face which is shorter, and more subordinate to, the original building, than would be the case here.
17. I have found that the scheme would harm the character and appearance of the SCCA. The harm to that designated heritage asset is a matter to which I attribute great weight. However, as the harm caused would be 'less than substantial', in accordance with the Framework and BLP Policy BHC1, I am required to weigh it against the public benefits of the proposal.
18. In its favour, and in accordance with the Framework, the proposal would provide the existing, and any future, occupants with additional space and slightly improved living conditions; and there would be short term and limited economic benefits during construction.
19. However, the harm the scheme would cause would not be outweighed by its very modest public benefits. The proposal would thus conflict with the Framework and BLP Policy BHC1. It would also conflict with those parts of BLP Policy DMP1 which require development to complement the locality and to conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets, and it would fail to accord with the advice in SCDG.
20. I have considered representations by interested parties, including an objection, and a petition with many local signatories in support. I also note that the appellant engaged in pre-application discussions with the Council.
21. However, having considered the scheme on its planning merits, it would fail to accord with the development plan when considered as a whole and, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR