



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 December 2022

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/22/3305221

111 Bridge Lane Golders Green, Barnet NW11 9JT

- 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 UPP - Architects + Town Planners against the decision of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 22/1942/HSE, dated 11 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as Two storey front, side and rear extensions. Associated alterations and extensions to roof including increased roof pitch, 2no. side and 2no. rear dormer windows and 2 no. front rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon:
 - The existing building and the character and appearance of the locality; and
 - The living conditions of No.113 Bridge Lane, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is located on the corner of Bridge Lane and Princes Park Avenue, where the frontage of the property is to Princess Park Avenue. The local area forms a number of streets that contains formally laid out speculative housing which appears to date from the early to mid-twentieth century. The local area contains detached dwellings which have a symmetry in their placement with a consistent building line and setback with front gardens and low boundary walls and hedging. There are also visual gaps in between properties and over garages where glimpses to the tops of trees in rear gardens are experienced and is a positive characteristic of the area alongside street trees and front gardens.
4. On my site visit I noticed similar design and size characteristics, some of the dwellings had roof extensions via dormer windows or small crown roof extensions, some of which appear more successful than others. Some of the main characteristics of the dwellings that contribute to the qualities of local character and local distinctiveness included hipped roof forms, red clay tiles, a functional design and appearance with many dwellings having rendered and brick finishes.

5. The appeal site appears to be one of the characteristic detached dwellings and given its position on a corner plot, has more facades of the dwelling exposed to the public realm. The building is unusual in its positioning which comprises of a main two storey component with hipped roof with its side façade in line with the front of dwellings along Bridge Lane, with the rear wall being very close to the side boundary of No.113 Bridge Lane. Extensions to the rear of the dwelling have enclosed the gap between the properties further. The building is of a functional design, two storeys, clad in render with a main red clay tiled hipped roof and secondary hipped roof behind which is setback from the southern side of the front façade. To the south of the appeal building is a large single storey building which is attached to the dwelling and takes up all of the land on this side of the dwelling, with the garden space being the remaining area to the front and north of the dwelling fronting the road. The appeal site due to its layout is therefore quite prominent in the street and displays a number of positive qualities which are experienced within the street scene, such as containing many of the important design elements described and original roof forms, functional design and visual gaps between properties. These positive elements reinforce the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the locality.
6. In undertaking extensions and alterations to existing buildings, the London Borough of Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) Policy CS5 seeks to ensure that redevelopment delivers a high quality design by respecting local context and distinctive local character. The London Borough of Barnet Development Management Policies (DMP) Policy DM01 seeks to encourage development that provides positive characteristics such as understanding context, be high quality in design, form, scale, layout and the spaces around them, amongst others. These policies are supported by the Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (RDG) which offers guidance on specific elements of designing new schemes and alterations, such as local character, pattern of development, building line and setbacks, scale, massing and height, materials, colour and architectural detailing, amongst others. London Plan Policies D3 and D4 are design led policies which seek to ensure good design and a design led approach which takes into account context, character, and the surrounding area.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to a previous planning approval on the appeal site¹ where a two storey front, side and rear extensions, including crown roof were approved. There is no information within the appeal documents as to whether the approval has commenced, as it would have appeared to have lapsed based upon the information before me. Even so, the policy position in terms of the local development plan is the same, albeit the London Plan has been updated since the approval of this application. Whilst this planning approval results in a visually larger extension that increases the bulk and mass of the dwelling considerably; it would be much less than is proposed under this current application and appeal.
8. The flat component of the crown roof has been widened and lengthened which elongates the appearance of the roof and shortens the pitch of the roof so that the visual massing and appearance is much more prominent. The proposed roof form gives an overcomplicated appearance of the roof form, unlike anything in the immediate context. Whilst I appreciate the increase in

¹ Barnet Planning Ref: 18/7032/HSE, approved 3 May 2019

floorspace of 21.48Sqm above the approval is seen by the appellant as being small, this needs to be seen in context to the original building and those surrounding where the increase in size of the dwelling is very large. Elements such as roof form, pitch, proportion and subservience are some of the considerations mentioned in the RDG as essential for making a development congruent with its surroundings, which is not the case in this proposed development.

9. Whilst I agree with the appellant that some elements of the design such as the addition of bow windows will assist in improving the appearance of the dwelling, this improvement is offset by the disproportionate roof form, increased pitch and elongated flat component to the top of the roof. As such, I disagree that the proposal when taken as a whole would enhance the appearance of the building, and its relationship with buildings in the surrounding locality.
10. I also note photographs of a number of buildings² where the appellant has suggested that these are similar approvals of roof extensions which have a pitch of greater than 55 degrees. Whilst this may be the case, these buildings do not form an established character which contributes to the positive qualities of local distinctiveness. I am unaware of the circumstances behind each approval, whether they were historic approvals under a different policy position, or whether they may have been undertaken under permitted development rights. Either way, whilst some examples are more successful than others, none of the examples appear to be alterations and extensions to the extent of the appeal site which are very large indeed. I also appreciate commentary that the appellant has sought to reduce the roof pitch, however this has minimal effect given the extent of extensions proposed. Taking this into account, the presence of other roof extensions does not in this case illustrate that the proposal under consideration would be appropriate when considered against the policies of the development plan.
11. In conclusion of this matter, the proposed extensions when combined would result in the loss of positive characteristics and would be clearly disproportionate and the additional visual bulk and massing would be unlike other extensions constructed within the immediate vicinity. Consequently, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, and the local distinctiveness of the locality on this prominent corner location and be contrary to CS Policy CS5, and DMP Policy DM01, which is supported by the RDG as described previously. Additionally, the proposal would be contrary to London Plan Policies D3 and D4.

Living Conditions

12. No.113 Bridge Lane has a first floor rear window that looks over the rear garden and lies close to the shared boundary with the appeal building. There is a small extension to the first floor rear of this dwelling next to the first floor window. According to the calculations provided by the appellant, the wall would be 1.24 metres setback from the neighbouring window, which is 9 centimetres closer than the lapsed approval mentioned previously. However, the width of the extension is not discussed by the appellant, where the increased flat component of the crown roof would cause a greater pitch and built form towards the boundary than would be created by the approved (but lapsed)

² Appendix 3 of the Appellant's Statement of Case

scheme. This would have the effect of increasing the built form and perception of visual bulk and massing from this first floor rear window. When combined with the overall length of the extension close along the boundary, according to the Council's calculations there would be built form along the boundary projecting 8.78 metres. Whilst it is appreciated that there is some ability of outlook to the south, much of the existing outlook towards the south-easterly direction would be obscured by the proposal giving a type of tunnelling effect to the neighbouring residents.

13. Taking the above into account and in conclusion of this matter, the increased bulk due to the elongated crown roof and the increased depth would cause unacceptable harm towards the living conditions of the neighbouring occupier at No.113, by reason of loss of outlook. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policy D3 of the London Plan, and DMP Policy DM01 which seeks to protect living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
14. I note that CS Policy CS5 is noted in the reason for refusal, however this policy is associated with character and design, and does not appear to be relevant to the consideration of living conditions.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR