



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/N1920/D/22/3299540

41 Homefield Road, Radlett, WD7 8PX

- 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 Antony Burns against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
- The application Ref 21/2284/HSE, dated 24 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2022.
- The development proposed is described as a proposed 2 storey front extension, addition of a second storey over existing garage, with a single storey rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed 2 storey front extension, and addition of a second storey over existing garage.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey rear extension and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension at 41 Homefield Road, Radlett, WD7 8PX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/2284/HSE, dated 24 November 2021 so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The proposed single storey rear extension hereby permitted shall begin not later than three [3] years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The proposed single storey rear extension shall be constructed in accordance with approved plans:
 - 'Proposed Front and Rear Elevations,' Drawing No.4330-P-001 Rev B, Dated APR21,;
 - 'Proposed Side Elevations,' Drawing No.4330-P-002 Rev B, Dated APR21;
 - 'Proposed Plan,' Drawing No.4330-P-101 Rev B, Dated APR21;
 - 'Proposed Roof Plan,' Drawing No.4330-P-103 Rev A, Dated APR21;
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the single storey rear extension shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The roof area of the single storey rear extension hereby permitted shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area without the grant of further specific permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Preliminary Matter

3. The Council in their Planning Officer Report state that the proposed rear extension would be appropriate and in accordance with the Development Plan policies. I have no reason to dispute this opinion, and given that this element is both functionally and physically severable from the first floor side and front extensions, a split decision is considered a suitable outcome. Given the only matters in dispute refer to the first floor extension and front extension, this will be the focus of this letter.

Main Issue

4. Taking the above into account, the main issue is the effect of the first floor side extension and front extensions upon the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding locality.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located along Homefield Road which is a curved road forming a crescent shape that contains formally laid out speculative housing which appears to date from the mid-late twentieth century. The local area contains predominantly detached single storey and two storey dwellings which have a symmetry in their placement that follows the curvature of the road. The dwellings around the appeal site appear to have a higher status in their designs and spaciousness where plots are wider and have dwellings that seek to emulate arts and crafts detailing with mock timber boarding or hanging tiles to wide feature gables which protrude from the main body of the dwelling. Dwellings further along Homefield Road where the road bends and has a small greenspace to the centre of the road tend to change in their style and designs with plainer and more functional designs, with narrower plots (compared to the area around the appeal site), as well as some dwellings having a catslide roof.
6. Along Homefield Road the character has a very spacious and well vegetated quality, dwellings are set back from the road edge with open front vegetated gardens, hedges and large mature trees with small grass verges located between the footpath and road edge. There are also visual gaps in between properties, particularly at first floor level where glimpses to the tops of trees in rear gardens are experienced and is a positive characteristic of the area alongside vegetation in the street and front gardens. I disagree with the appellant's Statement of Case (SoC) that there is an eclectic mix of dwellings. Whilst there are some alterations, for the most part dwellings had very similar design, proportions and size characteristics with brown concrete roof tiles, red brick, large protruding gable features to front facades that were either clad in hanging tiles or mock timber boarding, pitched and gable roof forms, and chimney stacks; all of which which are a dominant feature to the locality and design of the dwellings, amongst others.
7. The appeal site is one of the characteristic detached dwellings as part of this small estate. The building comprises of a main two storey component with pitched roof and central projecting wide two storey gable feature with hanging tiles. The ground floor level contains a forward protrusion with lean-to roof that matches the projection of the two storey feature gable. A garage is constructed to the side which provides the characteristic visual gap which affords views to the tops of trees in rear gardens. These positive elements reinforce the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the area. Whilst there are extensions and alterations to surrounding properties, they are relatively

- subservient and maintain the dominant characteristics in terms of their design and appearance.
8. In undertaking extensions and alterations to existing buildings, the Hertsmere Core Strategy (CS) Policies SP1 and CS22 are design related policies that seek to ensure that redevelopment delivers a high quality design by respecting local context and distinctive local character. The Hertsmere Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADM) Policy SADM30 seeks that development makes a positive contribution to the natural and built environment taking into account high quality design and local character, amongst others. The appeal site is also within a neighbourhood plan area of the Radlett Plan (RP) where Policy HD3 seeks to respect and enhance local townscape character and patterns. The policies of the CS and SADM are supported by a Planning and Design Guide (PDG) Part E: Guidelines for Residential 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.
 9. The proposal would remove the large central feature gable and propose a narrower two storey protruding gable which would be off-centre to the façade with the first floor side extension over the garage that would be in line with the façade of the existing building which would also be brought forward. The proposal, particularly the first floor side extension would remove much of the visual gap and adds a large amount of visual massing and bulk that gives a very elongated and awkward appearance stretching the majority of the width of the site. I can also appreciate the appellant's comments that there is a large amount of vegetation along the side boundary that reduces the presence of the visual gap, however the presence of vegetation and openness within the visual gap is experienced very differently from built form. Whilst in the appellant's opinion, these visual gaps have been replaced since 1998, whilst some properties may be closer than others, I do not agree that the removal of visual gaps is 'long established' or that they are not part of the qualities that contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of this locality.
 10. The resulting proposal would result in the two storey feature gable being much narrower and would be dwarfed by the extent of wall from the front façade, where design features such as these projections are meant to articulate the facade and reduce visual massing and bulk, however the proposed first floor alterations and resultant appearance is not successful in this respect. I can appreciate attempts by the appellant to reduce horizontal massing via small front ground floor extensions, but these too have been brought further forward and only adds to the visual massing and bulk, rather than reducing it. It is noted in the PDG that front extensions increase visual massing and bulk when not done appropriately, and that side extensions should reflect the roof form of the host dwelling, be subservient and reflect important characteristics such as visual gaps, and be set in from boundaries which this proposal would not achieve.
 11. The appellant has referred to other decisions such as an appeal decision¹ where a dwelling was replaced and the existing visual gap was not maintained in the new proposal. Whilst an application for a new dwelling is different from an

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/W/20/3248277, 12 Homefield Road

application for an extension, as described previously the dwellings towards the small green have a lower status and narrower building plots where gaps between dwellings are less. This existing dwelling appears to be one of the plainer types of dwellings, and different considerations are made about how the dwelling as a whole fits into the street scene, as compared to the application for an extensions and the resultant impacts of this at No.41. In the case specified the Inspector still viewed that in its context that an appropriate visual gap existed to enable the appearance of the dwelling not to be cramped within the plot. In this particular case at No.41, the extension is wide and the reduction in visual gap is to the extent that the width of the property would appear cramped within the plot. Whilst I note a number of other examples of approvals in the nearby area are given in the appellant's SoC, whilst I don't have the circumstances or the merits behind the approval of each application, none of these applications propose an elongated extension and first floor alterations in a similar way to the appeal site. It perhaps illustrates that each application needs to be appreciated on its individual considerations and its merits. As such the presence of other planning approvals does not contribute to the acceptability of this proposed scheme.

12. In conclusion of this matter, the proposed extension would result in the loss of positive characteristics such as the visual gap between dwellings and would be clearly disproportionate and the additional visual bulk and massing would not be a satisfactory design response for the dwelling or the locality. Consequently, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building, and the local distinctiveness of the locality and be contrary to CS Policies SP1 and CS22, RP Policy HD3, and SADM Policy SADM30, which is supported by the PDG, as described previously.

Conclusions and Conditions

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should succeed in relation to the single storey rear extension. However, in relation to the front extensions and first floor side extensions, the appeal should be dismissed.
14. In respect of the single storey rear extension it is necessary to have the standard conditions of the standard time limit for the avoidance of doubt; and the extension to be constructed in accordance with the approved plans is also necessary as this provides certainty to the scheme which has been approved. A matching materials condition is required in order to be appropriate to the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality. A condition limiting the use of the roof to maintenance is necessary in order to avoid impacts towards living conditions.

J Somers
INSPECTOR