

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2023

by Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2023

Appeal Ref. APP/N5090/D/22/3310560

1 Carson Road, Cockfosters, Barnet EN4 9EX

- 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 Alev Aydin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application ref. 22/2621/HSE, dated 16 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as '*Part' two storey front extension, 1st floor side extension above existing and insertion of rooflight in existing roof.*
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor side and front extension and insertion of a front-facing roof light (amended proposal) at 1 Carson Road, Cockfosters, Barnet EN4 9EX in accordance with the terms of the application ref. 22/2621/HSE, dated 16 May 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans numbered/titled: 305.PL.00 Revision PL Site Location & Block Plan; 305.PL.01 Revision PL Existing Floor Plans; 305.PL.02 Revision PL Existing Elevations; 305.PL.03 Revision PL Proposed Floor Plans; and 305.PL.04 Revision A Proposed Elevations.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Preliminary matters

2. The appellant is clearly not happy with the planning process conducted by the Council. There are other administrative avenues available to address such concerns. My focus in this appeal is on the planning merits of the proposal.
 3. When compared to the application form, the description of the proposed works given on the Council's decision notice, which is also included on the appeal
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form, more accurately reflects what is proposed. The description I have used in the decision above is therefore derived from the Council's decision notice.

4. The application was amended after its original submission, before the Council took its decision to refuse planning permission. I have assessed the plans which were before the local planning authority when it made its decision, as listed on the second page of the decision notice.
5. The Council did not raise any specific planning objections to the insertion of a front-facing roof light. I see no reason to disagree with that stance.

Main issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed first floor side and front extension upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

7. The appeal dwelling is a 2-storey detached house with flat-roofed additions to the front and the southern flank. It is situated within a residential estate laid out as 3 separate cul-de-sacs, of which Carson Road is one although it leads to the 2 others (Ibsley Way and Eccleston Close). No. 1 stands on a wedge-shaped plot that is somewhat larger than the plots at the neighbouring dwellings on Carson Road. The houses on both sides of Carson Road were laid out to follow staggered building lines as they ascend the incline to the south.
8. Given the presence of large single-storey front projections (for example at nos 3 and 7) and sizeable double-storey or first-floor front additions (for example at nos 6, 11 and 13), the staggered building lines have been weakened in places. Moreover, I saw that there are many other double-storey or first-floor front extensions or wings to be found in the wider estate of the 3 cul-de-sacs, many of which were listed and photographed in the appellant's Design and Access Statement submitted with the application. It was also interesting to observe on my site visit that many of the more recently built houses at the southern end of Carson Road were originally constructed with substantial 2-storey front-projecting wings. All this makes for quite diverse street scenes, with front extensions or wings of various sizes and heights forming part of the area's character and identity.
9. It is proposed to add a narrow first floor side extension, the pitched roof to which would be set down 0.5 m from the ridge of the main roof. Reading the Council's Delegated Report, it would appear that the Council would not have opposed this extension if it had been submitted in isolation. Their objection stems from the fact that it would be linked to a first floor front extension. The Council felt that this would cumulatively result in a prominent large-scaled front extension of excessive width with a gable feature which would not relate well to the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.
10. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance 2016 (SPD) says that large front extensions will not normally be permitted. However, where it is considered that a building may reasonably be extended forward, the SPD provides guidance on design matters and the position of windows. It seems to me that the latter positive approach applies here because this is a detached house on a road with irregular building lines and many front

projections and because the Council may have been in favour of the scheme if the width of the overall first floor front extension had been reduced by 0.5 m.

11. I find that such a request was unnecessary. The linked first floor extension at the front would be no more than about half the width of the resulting front elevation and be covered by a hipped roof, receding from the street, complementing the existing roof form and set at right angles to and 0.5 m below the main roof ridge. It would also possess little in the way of depth or projection and would be well set back from the front edge of the existing flat-roofed ground floor front addition and from the street. There would be no disruption to the architectural style or features of the house. The original front elevation and the main roof would remain as the dominant physical features.
12. Whether or not this would be the largest first floor front extension on Carson Road, I am satisfied that the development would appear sufficiently subordinate to the existing building, when viewed as a whole, in terms of mass, scale, bulk, design and width. The important point is that the extension would result in a dwelling that appears attractive and well-designed in itself. Given all this and having regard to the prevalence and styles of other front extensions and wings in this locality and to the fact that no. 1 stands on one of the larger and wider plots and at the end of a row of houses, the scheme would not result in an incongruous form of development in the general street scene.
13. The proposed first floor side and front extension would make a visually positive contribution to its context and location, exhibit a high standard of design, be sufficiently complementary, sympathetic and subordinate to the parent building and show respect for local character and for the established grain of development, the street scene and the high quality suburban environment along Carson Road.
14. I have been made aware that other appeals concerning front extensions in this locality (at 4 Carson Road, 5 Carson Road, 11 Carson Road and 3 Eccleston Close) have been allowed. In any event, I have sought to determine this appeal entirely on its own merits.
15. I find on the main issue that the proposed first floor side and front extension would not harm the character and appearance of the dwelling or the surrounding area. There would no conflict with Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021, Policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy 2012 or Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan Development Management Policies 2012. Viewed in the round, those policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure development respects local context and distinctive local character by creating places and buildings of high quality design and respects the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets. The policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as it relates to achieving well-designed places. The scheme would also pay sufficient regard to the advice in the Council's SPD.
16. The scheme will enhance the quality of life for the occupiers of no. 1 by providing enlargements to 2 small, undersized bedrooms (bedrooms 3 and 4 on the plans). This is a further factor that weighs in favour of granting planning permission. The Council, correctly in my view, did not identify an excessive loss of amenity for neighbouring properties for any reason.

17. The Council suggests that 3 planning conditions should be imposed in the event of the appeal being allowed. In addition to a condition setting a time limit for the commencement of development, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the relevant approved drawings is necessary as this provides certainty. I have also imposed a condition requiring matching materials to ensure that the development preserves the character and appearance of the area.
18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised and the absence of objections from local residents, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR