



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2023

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/22/3309594

30 Melbourne Avenue, Pinner HA5 5SJ

- 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 Ayman Mahfouz against the decision of Harrow Council.
 - The application Ref P/2873/22, dated 5 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as alterations and extensions to raise roof height, front dormer, and side dormer to both sides.
-

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.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on the corner of Melbourne Avenue and Greystoke Avenue, where the frontage of the property is to Melbourne Avenue. The local area forms a number of streets that contain formally laid out speculative housing which appears to date from the mid to late twentieth century. The local area predominantly contains two storey detached dwellings along Melbourne Avenue 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. Along Greystone Avenue, the building form is lower in scale with a large amount of detached bungalows with a consistent spacing and setback from the road.
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 positive qualities of local character and local distinctiveness included hipped and gabled roof forms, clay tiles, a functional design and appearance with many dwellings having rendered and brick finishes. The character and distinctiveness also derives from the sense of spaces in and around dwellings, particularly with Melbourne Avenue forming the edge of the residential village where opposite are fields and an allotment gardens which adds to the spacious qualities of the locality.
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 of a functional design, with the main pitch of the roof along Melbourne Avenue, with a smaller forward projection with hipped roof with a lower ridge than the main roof, and a two storey rear hipped crown roof which runs parallel to Greystoke Avenue. 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, with a modified, but largely 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 dwellings, the Harrow Core Strategy 2012 (CS) Policy CS1 (B) seeks that new development responds positively to the local and historic context in terms of design, spacing, density and siting which reinforces positive attributes of local distinctiveness. Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (LP) also seeks to establish high quality design that has regard to massing, bulk, scale and height and their relationship to the surrounding layout. These policies are supported by a Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which provides further guidance and advice with regards to appropriate design principles employed in extensions and alterations. Additionally, the London Plan Policy D3 is a relevant consideration in that this policy introduces a design-led approach in order to achieve appropriate development.
7. The SPD states that the roof of a dwelling forms a significance part of the character of an area and needs careful consideration as to the character, appearance and qualities of local distinctiveness in the area. The existing dwellings in the surrounding area have not raised their ridge height and are proportionate to the wall height. I disagree with the Appellant's Statement of Case (SoC) that the raising of the ridge height would not be immediately obvious. It is clear to me that the increased ridge height would give the dwelling a 'top-heavy' appearance where the height from the eaves to the ridge would be disproportionate to the wall height, and together with the elongated crown roof would accentuate the massing and visual bulk of the building which would have an incongruous and disproportionate appearance within the street scene.
8. Turning to the proposed dormer windows, the SPD seeks that dormers reflect the characteristics of the surrounding area, be subordinate features of the roof, are setback from the ridge, sides and eaves of the roof and should not rise above the ridge. Given the location of the dwelling on a corner plot, both dormers would front the public realm. Front dormer windows are not found on the front roof planes of dwellings within this location and would not form part of the characteristics of this particular locality. In this particular case the dormer windows would add clutter to the roof and would not reflect the positive and established characteristics of the locality. Whilst I acknowledge the appellant's commentary that the dormers are set in from the ridge and eaves of the roof, additionally there is an awkward juxtaposition between the dormer on the front facing roof plane and the lower hipped roof protrusion to the front of the property. Whilst lower than the main ridge, the dormer would be taller than the ridge of the forward protrusion, giving a cluttered and overcomplicated appearance which detracts from the more function appearance of the roof form.

9. 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 CS1.B, DMP Policy DM1 A, DM1 B (a), (b) and (c) Policy D3 (D(1) and (11)), which is supported by the SPD. Additionally, the proposal would be contrary to London Plan Policy D3 as described previously.

Conclusion

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

J Somers

INSPECTOR