The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/22/3313806
4 Georgian Close, Stanmore, HA7 3QT

- 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 Irfan Hussain against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
- The application Ref P/2958/22, dated 12 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2022.
- The development proposed is described as a 'the construction of 2 no rear dormer windows and the conversion of existing loft floorspace to provide additional residential accommodation'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The Council's decision describes the development as 'alterations and extension to raise ridge height; two rear dormers; external alterations' and I have noted this description.

3. I have taken into account the amended plans submitted during the course of the appeal as those would not prejudice the interests of other parties. Those plans omit two of the three proposed dormers, reduce the scale of the remaining dormer and include two rooflights on the front elevation.

Reasons

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene. The development plan includes policies D3 D(1) and D(11) of the London Plan (2021), policy CS1 B of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) and policy DM 1 of the Council's Development Management Policies (2013) which together seek to ensure a high standard of design that respects the host building and the character of the area, having regard to scale, form and massing, amongst other things. National policy in the National Planning Policy Framework has a similar objective.

5. The appeal site lies within a cul-de-sac of modern detached dwellings that are mostly built in a mock Georgian style. Whilst there is a variety of house types, sizes and styles within the road, the dwellings fall into groups within each section of the road, with a strong degree of consistency within each group.

6. The dwellings that are sited at the western end of the cul-de-sac have the greatest variety in size and style and I noted a more recent dwelling that is not of a mock Georgian style with a more steeply pitched hipped roof and projecting front gable. Those dwellings are sited on the opposite side of the junction into the road and are not seen within the same context as the appeal site.

7. Most of the dwellings along the northern side of the road were built to a boxier design with a narrower frontage and horizontal windows. Most have been extended to the side with subservient extensions in a similar style. Those dwellings sit on the opposite side of the road from the appeal site and are therefore also seen within a different context.

8. At the far eastern end of the cul-de-sac is a group of more recently built dwellings that are not of a mock Georgian style and mostly have steeply pitched roofs with projecting gables and mock Tudor style detailing. The appellant's evidence includes a photograph of this end of the cul-de-sac and the wider area to show the variety of roof forms but the change in road surface and hedging at the entrance to this part of the road provides a clear distinction between these and the mock Georgian style dwellings and they too have a different context from the appeal site.

9. The appeal dwelling is the end one of four similar dwellings on the southern side of the road to the east of the junction. Although it is larger than the other three and has been extended previously, they all have a strong degree of consistency in having, in addition to a homogenous style of vertical windows, a greater degree of symmetry than most of the dwellings on the northern side. Most importantly, they each have a consistently shallow hipped roof with a uniform ridge height set back behind a narrow flat roof around the edge of the dwelling.

10. Thus, it is the consistency of style within each group, rather than the variety of styles within the street, that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the cul-de-sac. Where there are variations, these make little contribution to the street scene and are not always a positive addition.

11. The plans show that the proposed development includes the raising of the ridge height from 7.51m to 8.24m. I have had regard to the submitted roof plan and noted that the roof pitch angle would remain the same as currently on the front and rear elevations but the existing ridge heights within this group of dwellings can be clearly seen from the street and the difference in height between the appeal dwelling and the other three would be clearly perceived. This would differentiate it from the other dwellings in the group, weakening the degree of consistency. The proposed eastern side elevation shown as C on the plans, when viewed from the eastern end of the cul-de-sac would be noticeably bulkier and its steeper pitch and asymmetrical form would appear contrived and at odds with the other roof forms in this group.

12. I have noted the appellant's Townscape Note submitted with the application, which concluded that the development would accord with the townscape, not be highly visible and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. However, my findings are based on my own observations during my site visit.

13. The amended plans omit the dormer in the rear elevation of the existing first floor side extension but this would not significantly reduce the bulk of the roof in the eastern side elevation. The omission of another dormer in the rear roofslope and the reduction in the size and scale of the sole proposed dormer in that slope is a significant improvement that would in itself be acceptable given its secluded siting if the proposed roof alterations were not harmful.

14. However, my findings regarding the proposed roof alterations are significant and overriding. I have noted that the additional accommodation is sought for the appellant's growing family but that does not outweigh the wider, public harm that would be caused. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal, by reason of the height and bulk of the roof alterations, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene and would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to above.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed and there are no material considerations that justify determining the appeal otherwise.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector