



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/P1940/D/22/3313578

129 Watford Road, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire, WD3 3DX

- 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 Nadeem Shakoor against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/1757/FUL, dated 20 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Side Extension to First Floor and Loft further to approved planning application 22/0958/FUL'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision describes the development as 'part retrospective: part single, part two storey side and rear extension; loft conversion including hip to gable roof extension with rear dormer and front rooflights; alterations to fenestration and construction of detached outbuilding'. As this describes the proposal in more detail, I have considered it on this basis.

Reasons

3. 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 CP1 and CP12 of the Council's Core Strategy (2011), policies DM1 and Appendix 2 of its Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD) (2013) and policies CA2 and Appendices B and C of the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan (2018) which, together, seek to ensure, amongst other things, high quality design. National policy in the National Planning Policy Framework has a similar objective.
4. The appeal site is a traditional semi-detached house located on a busy road within a mainly residential area of varying house styles. It sits adjacent to a dental practice and opposite a row of commercial premises. The dwelling, like others in this section of the road, is typical of its inter-war period with a hipped roof and a gabled two storey projecting bay on its front elevation. Whilst many of the nearby dwellings have been altered (including some with approval by the Council) to include hip to gable roofs over the years, most have not been extended to the side at first floor level and most of the pairs are symmetrical in width which creates an attractive rhythm in the street scene. The small gaps

between properties at first floor level create some openness in the street scene and make a positive contribution to its suburban character and appearance.

5. The proposed development includes ground floor and first floor side/rear extensions in a contemporary style with asymmetrical roofs, an alteration from a hipped to a gable roof, a rear dormer with a flat roof, front rooflights and an outbuilding. Planning permission was granted in 2022 for a similar scheme (ref 22/0958/FUL). The Council has said that the current scheme differs in that the first floor side/rear extension and roof alteration would be some 0.7m wider, extending almost up to the side boundary. The dormer would be 0.8m wider, 0.4m taller and 0.2m deeper. I saw at my visit that some works have begun which the Council has said are not unauthorised and that a previous garage at the side of the property has been demolished.
6. The Council has not objected to the proposed outbuilding which remains the same as that already approved. It also considers that the two additional rooflights would be acceptable. I have also noted that the Council has not objected to the form of the proposed roof given the variety of roof forms in the area. From what I have seen, I have no reason to disagree with its assessment on those matters.
7. However, as the adjoining dwelling at no 127 has not been extended to the side and retains its hipped roof, the proposed additional width of the first floor and the roof would lead to a much greater unbalancing of the pair of dwellings and would result in a significantly greater loss of symmetry than under the approved scheme. This would undermine the rhythm of the street scene and would detract from the traditional character of the pair.
8. At my visit I saw that the recently built adjacent dental practice building at no 131 is sited very close to the side boundary, projects forward of the appeal dwelling and is of a different form and appearance to the neighbouring dwellings. However, the Council has said that it replaced a previous building in a similar position and that the space to the side of the appeal dwelling was a material consideration when it was approved. Although there are terraced properties opposite the appeal site and space between buildings is limited, the proposal would result in a much smaller gap at first floor and roof level than under the approved scheme. Irrespective of the non-residential use of no 131 and the appellant's view that the approved scheme results in an awkward and arbitrary stepped form of development, under the current scheme the buildings would appear unduly cramped together and this would diminish the suburban nature of the street scene.
9. The proposed dormer is significantly greater in size and scale than the approved dormer and would occupy almost the full width and height of the roof. It would not be sufficiently set in from the sides of the roof, from the rear wall or from the ridge and would be disproportionate to the roof. Although it would not be clearly seen from the street, it would be unduly dominant when seen from the rear garden of the appeal site and from the rear of the neighbouring properties at nos 127 and 131. I noted a number of other large rear dormers on the rear roofslope of several of the neighbouring properties at my visit but the Council has said that those were constructed as permitted development. I have not been told that any of those have a recent planning permission and as they add little to the character of the area, they do not provide justification for this proposal. Neither do the other appeals referred to

as each case is determined on its own merits and I am not persuaded that those are directly comparable to this case.

10. The appellant has said that the proposed development would provide much needed and flexible space for his family, allowing them to remain resident in this area and part of the community. He has also said that the works are a catalyst to significantly improving the insulation and sustainable credentials of the dwelling. That may be so and the improved insulation is to be welcomed but as there is an existing permission which could provide a similar level of accommodation and insulation, those matters do not override the harm that would be caused by this proposal.
11. I conclude, therefore, that the additional width and bulk of the first floor element of the side/rear extension and the additional width and bulk of the gabled roof, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene. The size and scale of the rear dormer would significantly harm the character of the dwelling. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the development policies referred to above.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed and there are no material considerations that justify determining the appeal otherwise.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector