The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2023

by Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/22/3310851
31 Burwood Avenue, Hillingdon, Eastcote HA5 2RY

- 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 P Hare against the decision of London Borough of Hillingdon.
- The application Ref 22333/APP/2022/1413, dated 29 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2022.
- The development proposed is Proposed first floor side/rear extension and associated works.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Eastcote Park Estate Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The Eastcote Park Estate CA, a planned 1930's housing development is significant for its attractive design characteristics of several different and interspersed house types positioned along curved streets. Their setting is also enhanced by the visual gaps between houses that allows views through, and together with grassed spaces, adds to its verdant character.

4. The appeal dwelling is situated adjacent to Number 29 Burwood Avenue and semi-detached to Number 33 Burwood Avenue. It has been extended from its original design although retains significant character. The proposal would extend above a single storey element to the side of the dwelling and tie into the existing roof form. Even though it would be set back from the front elevation, it would add substantial bulk and mass to the dwelling by virtue of its overall scale and this would be visible from several vantages within the street scene.

5. The existing roof is stepped and a further step in the roof would only seek to amplify its scale. Overall, I would not view it as a subservient extension to the host dwelling. As the appeal property is a pair of semi-detached houses that retains much symmetry even despite more recent additions, a substantial imbalance would arise thus detracting from the characterful relationship the pair of houses share with one another. The use of matching materials would not lead me to reach a different conclusion.

6. In addition, I am mindful of the contribution the spacing between houses make towards the character and appearance of the CA. The splayed nature of the layout of this house with Number 29, and the fact that the side of the appeal dwelling is single storey, exposes views through of a verdant character.

7. This proposal would considerably diminish this visual gap, made more severe as this gap is limited due to the adjacent layout of No 29. The view from the street scene would lose the verdant characteristics which these gaps are identified within the CA character appraisal to be of intrinsic value to the character and appearance of it. What gap that would remain would be a discernible difference resulting in a negative effect that would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

8. I have taken into account the comparison circumstances of other dwellings seen locally that have been brought to my attention by the appellant. However, from my investigation on the ground, this dwelling does not precisely share the same splayed characteristics as the appeal site and its neighbour, and its position is not located on a curve as per the appeal site. In any event, as is my duty, I have determined the proposal on its own individual merits.

9. As the appeal property sits within a conservation area, any development must be considered within the context of Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires that I pay particular attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

10. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. That is still so, irrespective of whether the potential harm is 'less than substantial'. This harm I find would be 'less than substantial' and in accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework, the public benefits must be balanced against any harm found. No public benefits arising from the proposal have been identified in the submission before me.

11. To conclude on this main issue, given the above, and in the absence of any defined public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Eastcote Park Estate CA. This would not meet the requirements of policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan:Part One 2012 and policies DMHB 1, 4, 11, 12 in respect of protecting the historic environment and good design aims, as well as the same objectives of policies HC1 and D4 of the London Plan 2021. In addition, it would not comply with the objectives of good design and safeguarding the historic environment as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Other Matters

12. Whilst there is no dispute between the parties with regards to its impact upon the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers, this is a neutral matter in the overall consideration of the scheme and neither weighs for or against it.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other

than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR