The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2023

by J Smith MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/22/3306785
59 Graham Road, Harrow HA3 5RP

- 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 Ms Pearl Lestrade-Brown against the decision of London Borough of Harrow.
- The application Ref P/3647/21, dated 2 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2022.
- The development proposed is a loft conversion with two storey side extension to form access.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. The appellant has made a costs application against the London Borough of Harrow. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. During my assessment of this appeal, I have noted that a Decision Notice and set of plans have been included in the documentation before me for the redevelopment to provide single storey (2 bed) bungalow and proposed vehicle access. This is for a previous application at 59 Graham Road. For the avoidance of doubt and absolute clarity, the appeal that has been determined, and which this appeal decision relates is for a loft conversion with two storey side extension to form access, as per the banner heading of this decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the host property.

Reasons

5. The appeal site relates to a detached residential building situated on a corner plot on Graham Road at a junction with Whitefriars Avenue. The appeal building is predominately rendered whereas Neighbouring terraced properties are finished in a mis of pale render, red brick or pebbledash.

6. During the time of my site visit, I noted that the ground floor comprises of a two-bedroom flat and the first floor comprises of a separate two-bedroom flat. Both flats have two separate access points.

I also noted that 59 Graham Road has a particularly long rear garden. As the appeal site is located on a corner plot, this increases the visibility of the rear elevation of the appeal site from Whitefriars Avenue. This is because the garden runs parallel to Whitefriars Avenue and therefore opportunities to view the rear of the property are extensive. I also noted that as the appeal site is detached, a small gap of visibility is apparent between the appeal dwelling and the adjacent neighbouring property of 57 Graham Road. This is a very similar relationship experienced by the rows of three or four terraced properties in the immediate vicinity.

7. The wider area is characterised by two storey terraced properties, which does make the detached nature of 59 Graham Road unique in this aspect. The north side of Graham Road (where the appeal property is situated) contrasts with the south side of Graham Road. This is because the rows of terraced properties on the north side are broken into groupings of three or four dwellings. This permits small gaps of visibility between the terraced rows. I did not note any dormers to the rear or front of properties in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site which were of a notable size. Considering the wider area, I did find that 35, 37 and 39 Graham Road do have small and sympathetic dormers to their front elevation, but these additions only utilise a small proportion of the roof space.

8. The London Plan 2021 (the LP) contains Policy D4. This policy seeks for proposals to have a high standard of design through the creation of a positive identity through its layout and design which should complement its surroundings. Policy CS1.B of Harrows Core Strategy 2012 requires development to respond positively to the local context in terms of design, density and spacing. Furthermore, it states that extensions should respect their host building. Policy DM1 of Harrows Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013 states that all development must achieve a high standard of design and will be resisted where it would be detrimental to the local character.

9. The London Borough of Harrow have also adopted a Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2010). Whilst this document is guidance for residential development proposals, as an SPD is a material consideration in making decisions on planning applications. Most critically, this SPD states that extensions should harmonise with the scale of the original building, character of the area, have a sense of proportion and not dominate the original building or streetscape.

10. Furthermore, the Residential Design Guide states that side extensions should also have a sense of proportion to the original building and the streetscape. The Residential Design Guide also states that the character of an area is significantly defined by the roof form of a property and therefore any proposed alterations to alter this appearance needs to be carefully considered. The SPD states that dormer windows should not dominate buildings.

11. The proposal includes a dormer roof extension which would sit across the majority of the current rear roof space. This would result in a large addition which would dominate the original dwelling. Given the appeal site is on a corner plot, with a long uninterrupted garden running parallel to Whitefriars Avenue, such a dominant addition would be highly visible and intrusive when viewed from Whitefriars Avenue.

12. Furthermore, the proposal includes a three storey side extension which would be situated between 59 and 57 Graham Road. This would reduce the visibility between the two properties and disrupt the character of the street where these gaps have remained. In addition, the proposed side elevation of the property would create a three-storey addition in an area where properties are of two stories. This addition would also appear incongruous, disrupting the harmony of the original dwelling when viewed from either Graham Road or Whitefriars Avenue.

13. Taking the above factors into account, the proposal would not create a high standard of design by reason of its overly large design and layout which would conflict with Policy D4 of The LP 2021. The proposal would not be subservient to the street scene and would fail to respect the local context and character as required by Policy CS1.B of Harrows Core Strategy 2012 and Policy DM1 of Harrows Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013.

Other Matters

14. I note that third party comments have been received in relation to this proposal. These responses raised concern on the proposal's appearance, harm to neighbour amenity with particular regard to sunlight, outlook, privacy and the effects of overbearing on neighbouring dwellings. As this appeal has been dismissed on the main issue above, I have not pursued these further.

15. My attention has been drawn to correspondence addressed to Harrow Council discussing various complaints made over the course of the original planning application. These are not matters for this appeal which I have determined on the evidence before me, and the individual merits of the proposal and they do not lead me to a different conclusion. As mentioned above matters relating to the cost's application are covered by a separate decision.

Conclusion

16. I conclude that there would an unacceptable harm on the character to the host dwelling and the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with the development plan and The LP 2021. No material considerations have been shown to have sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise. Therefore, I find that this appeal should be dismissed.

J Smith MRTPI

INSPECTOR