

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2023

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023.

Appeal Reference: APP/Y5420/D/23/3323811

Land at 2 & 4 Wellington Avenue, Tottenham, Haringey, London N15 6AS

- 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 H. Friedman against the decision of the London Borough of Haringey Council.
 - The application (reference HGY/2023/0731, dated 15 March 2023) was refused by notice dated 23 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as follows: *"erection of a type 3 loft extension together with a first floor rear extension across number 2 and 4 following recent appeal"*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr H. Friedman (the Appellant) against the London Borough of Haringey Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary points

3. Notwithstanding the description of the application that was given in the application form, the nature of the proposed development can more concisely be expressed, as set out in the Council's decision notice and in the appeal form, as *"erection of a type 3 loft extension together with a first floor rear extension across number 2 and 4"*.

Main issue

4. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located in a residential area in the southern part of Tottenham, where the houses are generally closely built up in a rectilinear street pattern.

6. In Wellington Avenue, the houses are laid out in continuous terraces with small front gardens and, although there are trees in the public highway, the streetscene is dominated by the two- and three-storey houses that line the road. In many cases, the original Victorian houses have been much changed over the years, however. Even on front elevations, the original form has frequently been altered by the addition of flat-roofed upper floors or dormers that subsume the original architectural forms. Some examples are cruder than others but the character and appearance of the streetscene has been degraded as a consequence.
7. Numbers 2 and 4 Wellington Avenue have retained their two-storey structure (with roof spaces), although some architectural details appear to have been altered. In spite of differences, however, they form a pair architecturally, at the western end of their terrace, and they retain their original character, which benefits the surroundings.
8. The scheme that is the subject of this appeal would involve the construction of an additional upper floor (above the existing first floor) with a pitched roof that would also accommodate a further bedroom to each house, lit by rooflights. First floor extensions would also be added to the rear of both houses, across much of the combined rear elevation.
9. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation.
10. Policies in the Development Plan also share these basic principles. In particular, Policies D3 and D4 of 'The London Plan' (dated March 2021) promote a "design-led approach" to development and identify some important design criteria, including the need to enhance local context.
11. Similarly, Policy SP11 in 'Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies' (dated March 2013 and subsequently consolidated) provides that new development should "enhance and enrich" its surroundings, respecting the local context, while Policies DM1 and DM12 of the 'Development Management DPD' (adopted in July 2017) focus on delivering high quality design, specifically in relation to residential extensions (among other things).
12. The Council's 'House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document' (which was adopted in 2013) is also relevant but it does not have the force of the statutory Development Plan. It does, however, provide a definition of a "type 3" loft extension (referred to in the planning application form). Such extensions are identified in the guidance as one of the "*approved ways in which homes may be extended at roof level*" and are described as a "*a full 2nd floor extension with loft accommodation at 3rd floor level possible within pitched roof, in materials to match*".
13. In this case, the additional storey would be somewhat clumsy and ungainly in appearance, even though it would reflect some other developments that have

taken place in the vicinity, including elsewhere in Wellington Avenue. At the rear, the proposed first floor extension across the combined elevation (of numbers 2 and 4) would incorporate a flat roofed volume, with pitched roof margins. It would add to the bulk and awkwardness of the project, creating an unattractive and overly intrusive construction. The effect on the outlook from neighbouring properties would be unacceptable in planning terms. Moreover, the visual impact of the flank wall of number 2 (with its additional rear extension) would be especially dominant and intrusive.

14. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is “sustainable” in planning terms, and the proposed development would make substantial additions to the existing houses. The Council’s design guidance is important but it cannot be determinative and each case must be determined on its own merits, taking account of all the material planning considerations. In this case, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the character and appearance of the original houses and their surroundings clearly outweighs the benefits of the project.
15. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR