



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2023 by S Wilson LL.B. MSc MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/23/3323697

1 Fallowfield, Stanmore, Harrow HA7 3DF

- 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 S. Meghani against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/0173/23, dated 19 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as 'part single storey front/side extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Application for Costs

3. An application for an award of costs has been made by Mr S Meghani against the Council of the London Borough of Harrow. This is subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matter

4. The description of development differs from that on the application form. There does not appear to be an agreement between the main parties for the change. I have therefore used the description above which is from the application form and, in any case, adequately describes the development to which the appeal relates.

Main Issue

5. Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Little Common Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a large, detached family house, set within a large plot which is screened by landscaping. The CA comprises high quality often historic architecture and traditional design elements with large, low intensity, listed houses set within extensive grounds with high boundary walls or landscaping. There are very high-quality public and private open spaces and greenery which lends a soft and verdant informality to the area and, in some places, a semi-

rural ambience. The trees and open spaces provided by Stanmore Common and the picturesque ponds surround and interact with attractive building groups in Little Common, imparting much of the special landscape and CA qualities.

7. The proposal would introduce a flat roof to the front elevation of the dwelling. Its impression would be tempered slightly by retaining the existing front single pitch roof slope. However, the flat roof element of the design is not a characteristic of the appeal property, dwellings in the vicinity, or indeed the CA. The introduction of an incongruous flat roof on the sensitive front elevation would jar against the existing more traditional approaches and in some cases historic architecture.
8. Whilst there is no distinct building line at the appeal site, the front elevations within the CA are an important and sensitive feature. The front extension would bring the footprint of the dwelling further forward, disturbing the composition of the front elevation of the building itself, blurring the subserviency of the side addition and introducing further mass and scale.
9. The proposed fenestration changes would not harmonise with the existing design, follow the guidance set out in the Little Common Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2013) (SPD) nor specify the materials to be used. Whilst materials can be addressed by condition, the design conflict cannot and as such would be harmful due to its lack of coherence.
10. The dwelling is screened by mature landscaping. It is nonetheless still possible to secure views of the property from other areas of the public realm. Any removal of existing landscaping would reveal more of the property. However, it is not the removal of this vegetation as proposed that is harmful, but the development proposed itself. With this and the above in mind, the proposals would fail to either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
11. The harm to the CA as a whole would be less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (the Framework). Nevertheless, it is a matter of considerable importance and weight. The Framework requires that such harm be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. It would provide a private benefit to the appellant with no advanced or discernible public benefits that would be capable of outweighing the harm.
12. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to comply with Policy D3 (D(1) and (11)) and HC 1 C of The London Plan (2021), Core Policy CS1 of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012), Policies DM1 A, DM1 B (a), (b) (c) and DM7 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (2013) insofar as they require a high standard of design that responds positively to local distinctiveness and be sympathetic to the significance of heritage assets. The proposal would further fail to comply with the Supplementary Planning Documents: Residential Design Guide (2010) and the adopted Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas SPD (December 2013) including appendix 1: Little Common Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy for the same reasons.

Other Matters

13. Whilst other properties on Fallowfield have had substantial alterations, notably Nos 3 and 4, I cannot be sure of their location within the CA, the planning merits and restrictions of those schemes nor the policies under which they

were determined. Consequently, I differentiate them from the appeal proposal and do not change my findings in their light. In addition, a pre application advice letter is the opinion of an officer of the Council as the local planning authority. It is not binding on the final outcome of a planning application or appeal and is not a formal grant of planning permission.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight (including the Framework) that would indicate a decision other than in accordance therewith. I therefore recommend the appeal be dismissed.

S Wilson

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis I dismiss the appeal.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR