



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 November 2023

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/23/3325017

151 Firs Drive, Hounslow TW5 9TB

- 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 Jatinder Singh Gill against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00452/151/P5, dated 18 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension, including the demolition of an existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cranford Village Conservation Area ('CVCA').

Reasons

3. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in respect of development affecting conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance.
4. Policy CC4 of the Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (2015) ('HLP') requires development proposals to conserve and take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas having regard to matters such as grain, scale, form and proportions. It continues that extensions should be high quality design, which is sympathetic to the scale, form, materials, style and detailing of the original building.
5. The Cranford Village Conservation Area Appraisal (2018) depicts the CVCA as cut off from the rest of the borough, thus giving it a quiet and secluded ambiance. It describes Firs Drive as an estate of well-maintained, detached and semi-detached houses, which were built in the 1930s to a coherent design, some with mock Tudor fronts, and with interesting roof designs and brick details. It continues that some of the houses are located around small, attractive greens; and that the spacing between the houses is an important feature, which expresses the modest density of the development.

6. The host property, in common with most of the other houses around the central green on this part of Firs Drive, is semi-detached and hipped roofed, with a single double height bay to the front, and a red brick and tile finish.
7. The extension's hipped roof would reflect the form of the host, and it would be faced in matching materials. However, whilst its ridgeline would be set down, at around 3.5 metres wide it would be just over half the width of the original house, contrary to the advice at paragraph 4.5 of the Hounslow Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2017 ('SPD').
8. Moreover, although the proposed double bay window to the front would broadly reflect the detailing of the host, it would add to the scheme's bulk, and it would introduce a competing architectural element, which would jar with the consistent and coherent pattern and style of houses in this part of Firs Drive, which have a single double bay window to the front.
9. The appellant has provided examples of permitted first floor and two storey side extensions elsewhere on Firs Drive. I do not have all the details of those, but whilst many of the houses on this part of Firs Drive have single storey side extensions, very few that I observed have two storey side extensions, and the gaps at first floor level contribute to the area's distinctive, spacious character.
10. Notwithstanding its position recessed well back from the host's front face, the proposed two storey extension, with its corner close to the boundary with No 153, would significantly close the gap between these two properties at first floor level. From the central green and in the streetscene, it would disrupt the harmonious and locally distinctive pattern of well-spaced, semi-detached pairs.
11. For these reasons, notwithstanding the proposed use of matching materials, the scheme would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It would therefore conflict with those parts of HLP Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 which require high quality design, which complements the original building, harmonises with adjoining properties, and responds to its context, having regard to matters such as layout, grain and massing, and the local architectural vernacular. It would also conflict with the advice in the SPD.
12. For those reasons, it would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CVCA. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework'), I have attributed great weight to the conservation of that designated heritage asset.
13. However, as the harm caused to it would be 'less than substantial', I am required by the Framework and by HLP Policy CC4, to weigh it against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case the benefits would be largely private relating to the flexible use and lifetime enjoyment of the accommodation by its occupants, and there are no public benefits that would outweigh the significant harm that I have found. The scheme would therefore also fail to accord with HLP Policy CC4 and the Framework. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR