

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 November 2023

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/23/3326695

10 Grosvenor Road, Northwood, Hertfordshire HA6 3HJ

- 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 Qaiser Vakani against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0427/FUL, dated 10 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey front, side and rear extensions and loft conversion including roof extensions and insertion of roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the house and Grosvenor Road.

Reasons

3. 10 Grosvenor Road is a 2 storey detached house of highly articulated form, with Arts and Crafts-type features such as hipped roofs, a cat-slide roof to one side and a projecting gable and full height bay windows at the front. It sits within a residential street of similar, but architecturally varied houses.
4. The proposal would add 2 storey, first floor and roof extensions to the front, sides and rear. This follows on from a previous proposal for slightly larger extensions, which was dismissed at appeal¹. That Inspector found that the previous proposal would significantly harm the area's character and appearance due in short summary to concerns about: (i) the jarring, contemporary nature of some full height glazing proposed at the front; and (ii) the rectilinear massing of the resulting building being bulky and excessively dominant in the street scene. The key changes in the current scheme are that the full height glazing would be split up by the insertion of a band of brickwork and the extension on the left-hand side of the house would be set back from the main frontage and down from the main roof.

¹ . APP/P1940/D/22/3307177

5. There are aspects of the proposal which I find to be acceptable in themselves. Like the previous Inspector I see no objection to considerably increasing the size of the house. The use of a crown roof appears to be fairly typical of the area so is already part of local character. The revised glazing pattern would now sit more modestly next to the projecting gable and bay window, which would remain the key architectural feature at the front of the house. Finally, the reduction to the front/left-hand side extension would help to break up the massing of the building on that side so that it would no longer appear to be overly bulky or rectilinear.
6. The right-hand side of the house would, however, be much the same as previously proposed. The existing small scale and finely detailed design on this side would be subsumed into a somewhat massive, unarticulated structure that would significantly downgrade the house's current contribution to the street scene. It would be a prominent and overly bulky feature, seen in angled views from the street.
7. The appellant refers to a number of other houses on the street which have some features in common with the proposal for No 10. I accept that deep plan side elevations are not unusual here and are part of the local character. The large scale changes proposed for the right-hand side of this particular house, however, would be a significantly retrograde step in its design quality.
8. While accepting that there are some small but distinct improvements in comparison to the previous appeal scheme, I nevertheless have to conclude that this proposal as a whole would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the house and Grosvenor Road. It conflicts with policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy and policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document, which expect developments to achieve a high standard of design that conserves and enhances the quality of an area.
9. I have taken all other matters raised into account. In particular, I recognise the appellant's reasonable wish to extend their family home, making more efficient use of the site. I note the concerns about the Council's Committee decision-making process, but have to assess the proposal on its planning merits. On the other hand, despite continuing local objections about loss of light and privacy, I agree with the previous Inspector that the proposal would not significantly affect neighbours' living conditions.
10. I find nothing to outweigh or add to my findings in relation to the main issue. I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole, and that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR