
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2024

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/23/3325518

55 Woodlands, Golders Green, London, NW11 9QS

- 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 Isaac Hirsch against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 22/6111/HSE, dated 28 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is a part single and part two storey front, side and rear extension. Creation of habitable rooms in the roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a part single and part two storey front, side and rear extension and the creation of habitable rooms in the roof space at 55 Woodlands, Golders Green, London, NW11 9QS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/6111/HSE, dated 28 December 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site location plan, 578 S 01, 578 AP 01-B, 578 AP 03-B, 578 AP 04-A, 578 AP 05-A, 578 AP 06-A, 578 AP 07-A, 578 AP 08-A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the original building.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. Firstly, the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene of Woodlands and the surrounding area; and secondly, the effect of the proposed front and rear first floor extensions on the living conditions of occupiers of 53 Woodlands with respect to visual intrusion and outlook.
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Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a traditional detached two storey dwelling with a hipped roof and an attached single storey garage to the side. It has a two storey front bay under a hipped roof. The dwelling has been extended in the past through a loft conversion with rear dormer and through the addition of a 7.7m single storey rear extension which occupies the full width of the plot. It is situated on a gently sloping site such that No 53 lies at a lower level and No 57 at a higher level than the appeal dwelling. The roofs therefore step down one from the other.
4. Woodlands is a street characterised by traditional, detached dwellings of a similar age to the appeal dwelling. Originally, they appear to have been hipped roofed and with a two storey front projection. In some cases, this is a bay under a hipped roof, similar to that seen at the appeal site. In others it is a ground floor bay under a wider first floor projection with a gable ended roof. Many of the dwellings have undergone extension and alteration, including to the front projections, and at roof level in the form of crown roofs and prominent box dormers. These changes are sufficiently numerous to have been absorbed into the character of the street scene.
5. The Council raises no objection to the proposed porch or the rear dormers. I agree that these would be well designed and proportionate additions. I will therefore restrict my further consideration to the other aspects of the proposed extensions.
6. To the rear, the dwelling is dominated by the large single storey rear extension and to a lesser extent by the large box dormer that sits in the hipped roof slope. This gives the dwelling an unbalanced appearance with the first floor appearing dwarfed by the large and prominent additions. The proposed first floor rear extension which would be some 3.7m deep would project over approaching half the depth of the single storey addition. Although it would follow the boundary with No 53 and abut a single storey extension to the side and rear of No 53, it would continue the existing side wall of the appeal dwelling and be over 2.5m from the first floor side elevation of No 53. As a result, it would not appear cramped. The first floor side extension, although set back from the rear façade, would also be visible. Together, these would give the first floor, when seen from the rear, greater presence and help to redress the balance with the enlarged ground floor. In addition, the enlargement and re-arrangement of window and door openings would result in a better proportioned and coordinated appearance than at present in which the amount of blank wall appears disproportionate.
7. The proposed roof extension would result in the hips being steepened and the roof increased in height by about 0.4m to create a crown. The larger rear roof slope would not appear out of place in the context of the enlarged first floor, existing ground floor or with neighbouring dwellings. The appeal dwelling would remain higher than No 53 and lower than No 57, which already has an enlarged crown roof. Moreover, the proposed rear roof slope would allow the insertion of two small dormers which would be set sympathetically within it, improving its appearance when compared with the existing arrangement. Finally, when seen from the front, the enlarged roof would appear in proportion with the dwelling and with the existing crown roof at No 57.

8. Turning to the alterations and extensions to the forward projection, these would result in the double bay being built forward by about 1m. However, since the existing bay is set behind the front building line at Nos 53 and No 59 and other dwellings nearby it would not project forward of the moderately consistent building line in this part of Woodlands. At first floor the bay would be completely rebuilt to form a half timbered projection below a half timbered gable. Whilst this would materially change the appearance of No 55, it would be consistent with many other dwellings in the street, including No 53, that have similar but original projections and front gables, thus preserving local character. At ground floor, the existing bay would be replaced with a square bay that was narrower and shallower than the first floor. This would be consistent with the arrangement seen at other dwellings.
9. The Council is concerned that the proposed gable would have a steeper pitch than similar gables elsewhere and would thus be higher overall and, in addition, the height of the windows would be increased. However, this would ensure that the projection overall was in proportion with the larger and higher roof and remained in keeping with the dwelling as a whole.
10. The extensions would also involve, at first floor, a side addition to the main façade. The enlargement would be limited such that a gap of 2m would be maintained at first floor between the appeal dwelling and No 57. Although not set back from the façade the small additional width at the front corner would ensure subordination. At ground floor the front elevation of the existing side garage would be brought forwards to be in line with and integrated with the porch. This would give a seamless and sympathetic appearance and since similar forward extensions exist at a number of other dwellings nearby it would be in keeping with local character. Overall, the addition would thus be modest and in proportion with the dwelling.
11. At first floor and well set back from the front elevation, the side extension would be further widened. A gap would remain between the proposed side elevation and No 57 but this would be less than one metre and the roof would not be set down from the crown. Whilst this would not comply with guidance set out in the Council's Residential Design Guidance, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2016, the limited width and significant set back from the front elevation would be sufficient to ensure subordination. Moreover, a similar side extension at a house nearby preserves both the local character and the appearance of that dwelling.
12. It is concluded on the main issue that although extensive and resulting in a change to the appearance of the host dwelling, the proposed extensions would represent high quality design that would complement and preserve local character. In consequence, the extensions would have no materially detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the host dwelling, the street scene of Woodlands or the surrounding area. There would thus be no conflict with Policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) (CS), 2012 or Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) (DMP), 2012. Taken together and amongst other things, these require new development to respect local context and distinctive local character through high quality design which preserves or enhances local character.

13. There would be design conflict with the SPD in respect of separation distance, scale and proportion. However, I find this conflict limited and in the circumstances of the case not a compelling guide when assessing the appropriateness of the proposed development.
14. Turning to the living conditions of neighbours, although the first floor rear extension would be on the shared boundary with No 53 it would be separated from the first floor at No 53 by a single storey side addition with no openings in the rear elevation. This would ensure that although the extension was some 3.7m deep, and notwithstanding the difference in site levels, it was well separated from the closest windows in No 53 and no material loss of outlook or overbearing effect would occur. Neither would the extension appear unduly visually intrusive when seen from rear windows. The first floor front extension would be modest and there would remain a satisfactory separation from the closest windows in No 53, thus ensuring that no material loss of outlook and no overbearing effect occurred.
15. It is concluded on the second main issue that the proposed front and rear first floor extensions would have no materially harmful effect on the living conditions of occupiers of 53 Woodlands with respect to visual intrusion or outlook. In consequence they would comply with Policy CS5 of the CS, Policy DM01 of the DMP and with the SPD which, taken together and amongst other things expect new development to be designed to ensure adequate outlook for adjoining occupiers.
16. Turning to conditions, the Council suggests two conditions in addition to the statutory commencement condition. I agree that the development should be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in materials that match the existing building for the avoidance of doubt and to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.
17. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

K E Down
INSPECTOR