



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2024

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31.01.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/23/3328407

11 Ravensbourne Crescent, Romford, RM3 0UD

- 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 Brannon against the decision of Havering London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P0476.23, dated 23 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension and two storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. No objection is raised by the council to the proposed front extension, or to the ground floor element of the side/rear extension. Thus the main issue in this case is the effect of the first-floor element of the proposed 2-storey side/rear extension on the street and rear garden scene and the appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a 2-storey semi-detached house situated on a residential estate of very similar houses, although there is a variation in external finishes, and additions such as porches. The other half of the pair, the attached No.9, is situated on a bend in Ravensbourne Crescent where there is a wide open area, in consequence of which the back elevation of the appeal site and its attached neighbour can be clearly seen from the highway.
4. The width of the contentious first-floor element of the extensions would be about 150mm more than the width of the original dwelling. It would be set off the boundary with the unattached neighbour (No.13) by 100mm, although it would be set in from the common boundary with its attached neighbour by 3m. It would extend back from the rear elevation of the house by 3m, and would have a low hipped roof above.
5. Part of the first-floor extension is the side element that has a gabled roof. There is little specific reference to this part of the proposals in the officer's report, although it is clear that this is included in the refusal reason. I mention it now because its width is a fundamental element in the width of the rear part of the extension.

6. The council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), in section 6, deals with side extensions. Under the heading 'Semi-detached', and sub-heading 'Two storey side extensions', at paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6, it states:

"6.5 The symmetry of semi-detached houses and the spacing between pairs are important considerations for side extensions. Side extensions should be subordinate to the existing dwelling to ensure they do not unbalance a pair of semi-detached properties, and to maintain the characteristic gap between neighbouring pairs of semi-detached houses.

"6.6 Two storey side extensions should be set back at least one metre from the front wall of the dwelling at first floor level, to create a break in the roofline and facade, and avoid a terracing effect. The ground floor level should not project beyond the main building line on the front elevation and preferably should be set back by at least a brick course to provide a good junction between old and new materials (Figure 8)".
7. The front of the proposed 2-storey side extension matches the example front elevation given in Figure 8, but it would not *"maintain the characteristic gap between neighbouring pairs"* since it would be built within 100mm of the curtilage boundary. This links with the part of the SPD that deals with rear extensions where it states (paragraph 5.14) *"An equivalent degree of amenity should be secured for the neighbouring dwelling on the non-attached boundary both in terms of the existing house and rear garden and in terms of the ability to build an extension in line with this SPD. For this reason two storey extensions built up to the property boundary of the non-attached dwelling will not normally be acceptable"*. The proposed 2-storey side and rear extensions are contrary to these elements of the SPD.
8. However, I see that No.15 has been extended in this way: indeed, in a very similar manner to that now proposed at the side of the appeal property. The officer refers to this as having been given planning permission in 2007, and then goes on to deal with its width, rather than its relationship to the non-attached neighbour. I have no information about the policy at that time, except to note that it pre-dates the adoption of the current Havering Local Plan, of November 2011 and the SPD also of 2011. I therefore do not view it as any sort of precedent for this appeal proposal, on the basis of desirable consistency.
9. Dealing with the specifics of the design of the rear element, not only would it be wider than the width of the existing house, but it would extend the total width by more than half of the existing rear elevation. This would produce a marked lack of balance in this pair of semi-detached dwellings. Whilst this would be at the rear of the pair, this part of the development would be in view from the rear environments of a number of houses alongside and to the rear of this curtilage. Development at the rear tends to be regarded as less important than that which is within the 'public domain', but neighbouring onlookers should also be given consideration when their outlook is affected.
10. In any event, because Nos.9 and 11 are situated on the bend in the road mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the rear elevation of the proposed extensions would be in view from the public highway, albeit, for just a short distance. It is noteworthy that this is true of the first floor extension at No.15, 2 houses further away, which is clearly visible in this gap. Although this is mainly a view

of the inner flank elevation, for the appeal proposal the hipped façade would be more apparent.

Conclusions

11. My conclusions in respect of the proposed 2-storey extensions are that the off-set hipped roof would be incongruous when viewed against the existing ridge and the gabled roof of the 2-storey side extension. The bulk and mass of the extensions would appear dominant and would not be subservient to the existing house. Since its depth and scale would be clearly visible across the bend in the street, it would be detrimental to the appearance of the house and the immediate surrounding area. Because of its bulk and mass and incongruous appearance it would also be detrimental to the visual quality of the rear gardens of Nos.7 and 9 and others that overlook the appeal dwelling. The first-floor extensions do not conform to the guidance in the adopted SPD, which in turn supports the policies of Havering Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies therefore stand against the proposal.
12. I have taken account of all other matters, including the suggestion that hedgerows and trees could screen the development from across the open area of the bend. Even if this could be effective from that viewpoint, it would not deal with the aspect from neighbouring gardens. For the reasons given, I will dismiss the appeal.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR