



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/23/3329157

23 Carter Drive, Romford, RM5 2NT

- 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 Mrs Coca Stanuti against the decision of Havering London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P0371.23, dated 3 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is (to retain) part single, part two storey side and rear extensions, single storey front porch extension and conversion of loft to habitable use including the installation of 1 x rear dormer and side rooflights (Retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The application form described the proposed development as "Two storey side/rear extensions, loft conversion of the roof space and rear dormer and single storey full width front porch". The council changed this to the description used in the heading above, as did the appeal form. I have adopted it as it more clearly identifies the development proposed.

Main Issues

3. The 2-storey side and rear extensions have previously been approved under application reference P1368.21. Therefore these elements are not contentious. The current proposal is similar to that approved except that it also includes a hip-to-gable roof extension and a front porch. Therefore the main issues are: i) the effect of the hip to gable roof conversion on the appearance of the pair of semi-detached properties and the streetscene; ii) the effect of the front porch extension on the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a 2-storey semi-detached house located at, and facing across the junction of Carter Drive with Carter Close, its attached neighbour being No.1 Carter Close. Number 1 retains the original hipped roof. The immediate surrounding area is residential and suburban in character, with rows of similar, semi-detached houses. Many of the houses have been altered and extended in various ways, contributing to a diverse streetscene. Hip-to-gable roof extensions and full width front extensions are not uncommon features.

5. The local development plan policies relevant to this case are policies 7 and 26 of Havering Local Plan 2011, and the guidance contained within the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Policy 7 requires that residential development preserves the residential amenity of current and future occupiers. Policy 26 requires a high quality of design in all new development, and that development respects and reflects the distinctive character of the local area, has a high quality of architectural design, and respects the streetscene.
6. The SPD provides guidance on householder extensions. In general terms, it seeks a high quality of design in new development. The SPD, and the policies, are in accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). At paragraph 6.5 the SPD states: *"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, ..."*.

The effect of the hip to gable roof loft conversion

7. It is not uncommon to find semi-detached pairs having differing roof designs. No doubt this is partly due to the fact that hip-to-gable roof extensions are often permitted development (PD) under Class B, Part 1, Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, as amended. Indeed, there are a number of examples of such changes, whether through PD or otherwise, such as at Nos.2, 11 and 12 Carter Close, and Nos.8, 34, 16 and 18 Carter Drive. In addition, I saw some examples of half-hipped roofs on one half of a pair.
8. The conversion of one end of a pair of semi-detached houses produces an unbalanced and unsatisfactory appearance. However, the advantage of such a development is that it provides the possibility of increased accommodation to meet a family's needs, relatively economically and without the need to move with all the expense and inconvenience that is entailed. The PD rights obviously reflect a judgement about the balance between appearance, the advantage of carrying out such development, and minimising the need to seek permission.
9. Notwithstanding the existence of hip-to-gable extensions referred to above, the appeal site is situated at a very prominent location at the junction of Carter Drive and Carter Close. As such the appearance of the appeal property and its attached neighbour has a considerable effect on the streetscene and the appearance of the area generally. The appeal development does not conform to the policies of the development plan or the guidance in the SPD, both of which are in place to avoid the harmful effect that is demonstrated in this case: the hip to gable roof conversion disturbs the symmetry and balance and has a harmful effect on the appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and the streetscene.

The effect of the front extension

10. Again, examples similar to the front extension carried out at the appeal site can be found in the locality. Nevertheless, this extension has to be viewed as part of the totality of the completed development. I do not agree with the appellant that this extension integrates with the rest of the development. Rather, it is an additional feature that disrupts the appearance of the pair, its bulk gives emphasis to the disruption and the uneasy and dominant relationship that is now exhibited. For these reasons I find that the front extension has a harmful

effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property and its neighbour, and the appearance of the streetscene.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons that I have set out above, I conclude that both the hip to gable roof conversion and the front porch extension, as carried out and in such a prominent position, have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the appeal property and its neighbour, and the appearance of the streetscene. Therefore I will not grant retrospective planning permission and the appeal will be dismissed.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR