



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/23/3330260

15 Mashiters Walk, Romford, RM1 4DA

- 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 and Mrs Shayhan Patelmaster Altyn Sincheva against the decision of Havering London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P1064.23, dated 4 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 26 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear dormer, Juliet balcony, gable window and roof lights to front. Single storey outbuilding to rear, ancillary to main dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The application form described the proposed development as "Loft Conversion, Kitchen Extension and Outbuilding". The council changed this to the description used in the heading above. I have adopted it as it more clearly identifies the development proposed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are: i) the effect of the proposed hip to gable extension on the appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and the streetscene; ii) the effect of the proposed rear extension on the host dwelling and the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers at Nos.13 & 17 Mashiters Walk; iii) the effect of the proposed rear dormer on the appearance of the host dwelling and the rear garden environment; iv) the effect of the proposed outbuilding on the appearance of the surroundings and the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached 2-storey house with a hipped roof. Mashiters Walk it is a well-established residential street with substantial suburban houses of good appearance in a variety of styles. It is a long crescent in form, running from Marshalls Drive to Havering Drive. It is the character of the part of Mashiters Walk in the vicinity of the appeal site that the following description particularly applies to. Although there is a variety of styles, the very pleasing character depends on a few characteristics, such as brickwork to the ground floor with render above, bow and oriel windows and applied timber

detailing. The majority of houses have hipped roofs. A number of houses exhibit side additions, mostly in the form of subservient extensions under hipped roofs. I saw a few examples where changes have been made that do not reflect well on the original houses or the character of the immediate area.

5. Havering Local Plan has policies that seek to ensure a high standard design, which are in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The latest edition of the Framework (December 2023) emphasises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that achieving well-designed and beautiful places is fundamental to the planning and development process (paragraph 131). Pursuing these objectives in some detail is the council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD guidance was adopted so that the urban environment is well planned, designed and managed and to ensure that the appearance and value of property in the borough is not eroded.

The effect of the proposed hip to gable extension on the appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and the streetscene

6. The SPD points out that conversion of a hipped roof to a gable on one house of a pair of semi-detached dwellings can unbalance the pair, and when control is exercised where hipped roofs are characteristic, will not be acceptable.
7. Whilst there are examples of hip to gable enlargement in Mashiters Walk, the result is a lack of balance and loss of symmetry; balance and symmetry are both characteristic and of importance to the area generally. I see that the front elevation of the attached neighbour has been altered at some time, so that the symmetry has been harmed to a minor degree, and that there is also a flat roof side extension 2 doors away on the other side which does not sit well with the hipped roof. These anomalies do not persuade me that the proposed hip to gable is acceptable, and nor do the other examples that can be seen that degrade the general attractive character. That attractive character is of value to the local community and should be protected.

The effect of the proposed rear extension on the host dwelling and the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers at No.13 & 17 Mashiters Walk and the rear garden environment

8. There is an existing modest ground floor extension to the existing house, but the proposal would bring the total length of extension, by measurement of the plans, to 7.25m, with a maximum height of 3.1m. The SPD sets out a 4m maximum depth for a semi-detached dwelling, with any length beyond that set in by 45°. This is to ensure a reasonable level of amenity for neighbouring properties. Number 17 has a pitched roofed conservatory at the rear and No.13 has a short extension including what appeared to be a 'lean-to' on the boundary with No.15. Neither of these compare with the overall depth and bulk of what is proposed, which I consider would result in a dominant and visually intrusive feature, detrimental to the character and appearance of the house, harmful to the character of the local garden environment, as well as being overbearing and to the detriment of the amenity of the adjoining occupiers at Nos.13 & 17.

The effect of the proposed rear dormer on the appearance of the host dwelling and the rear garden environment

9. The SPD also has policy for the size and design of dormers, which includes, as in this case, that they should normally face the rear garden. However, even then, there is a need to ensure that the visual quality of the garden areas, which may embrace a considerable number of dwellings, is not harmed by unsightly additions to the roof. The SPD guidance states that dormers should be contained well within the body of the roof, by being set well back from the eaves, and should be located well below the ridge line of the roof. The proposal fails to follow this guidance, and the appearance of the proposed dormer would be out of scale and character with the existing house, having the appearance of a third storey: it would be materially harmful to the visual outlook and environment of surrounding rear gardens.

The effect of the proposed outbuilding on the appearance of the surroundings and the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers

10. The proposed outbuilding appears to be largely intended as guest accommodation. It would certainly be large for an outbuilding purely serving the needs of a household, and at 7.7m by 7.7m would be overly dominant and incongruous in its setting. It would also be likely to bring additional activity deep into the garden area, bearing in mind its apparent prime purpose. These factors make it an unacceptable proposal.

Conclusions

11. My conclusions, for the reasons that I have set out above, are: i) the proposed hip to gable would result in a lack of balance and loss of symmetry to the pair of semi-detached houses, and thus degrade the general attractive character of the area which is otherwise of value to the local community; ii) the overall depth and bulk of the rear extension, would result in a dominant and visually intrusive feature, detrimental to the character and appearance of the house, harmful to the character of the local garden environment, as well as being detrimental to the amenity of the adjoining occupiers at Nos.13 & 17; iii) the appearance of the proposed dormer would be out of scale and character with the existing house and would be materially harmful to the visual outlook and environment of surrounding rear gardens; and iv) the proposed outbuilding would be overly dominant and incongruous in its setting and be likely to bring additional activity deep into the garden area, which would be harmful to the garden environment of neighbours.
12. The appellant justifies the proposals on the basis that they are the same as those built by neighbours and would coexist in complete harmony with appearance in the whole street. It will be apparent that I do not agree.
13. For the reasons given, I will dismiss the appeal.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR