



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: 6th February 1014

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/23/3333035

106 Mawney Road, Romford, RM7 7JB

- 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 Colin Andress against the decision of Havering London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P0989.23, dated 21 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is a double storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extension on the existing dwelling and the rear garden environment and amenity of neighbours.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a 2-storey semi-detached house with hardstanding to the front for off-street parking and a long narrow rear garden. The appeal property is built to the boundary with No.108, the unattached neighbour to the northwest, with a minimal gap. This neighbouring house has 2-storey outrigger under a mono-pitched roof. The attached neighbour, at No.104, has a recently built full width flat-roofed single-storey extension.
4. The proposal is part 2-storey/part single-storey. The 2-storey element would be set under a hipped roof, and would project some 4.17m from the original rear wall of the dwelling. This is the same depth as the 2-storey outrigger on No.108. The single storey rear extension of the other neighbour, at No.104, extends out almost 1m more than the proposed 2-storey element.
5. The single-storey element of the appeal proposal would be of the same width as the 2-storey part, but would be under a shallow mono-pitched roof. As far as the unattached neighbour is concerned, this is the only part of the proposal that would extend beyond its 2-story outrigger, and would do so by a further 2.23m. There is a 1 panel of fence about 1.8m high on the joint boundary, and then a shed in the neighbour's garden. The shed stands on the boundary and has a mono-pitched roof that rises into the garden to a height of some 2m by my estimate. Whilst the rear elevation of the outrigger is not the main rear wall, it effectively acts in that way on the rear of the appeal dwelling.

6. On the attached side, the proposed single storey extension would project 1.4m beyond that neighbour's extension, and would be off-set from the boundary by 1.4m. Since the neighbour's extension has in effect re-aligned the ground floor of the house, the effect of the projecting ground floor part of the appeal proposal must take this into account.

The effect of the proposed extension on the existing dwelling and the rear garden environment of neighbours

7. This issue relates to the physical height, bulk and mass, and in particular the width of the double storey rear extension. The council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises that extensions should be subordinate to the existing house (paragraph 4.4), and points out that uniformity and symmetry are defining characteristics of semi-detached and terrace dwellings (paragraph 4.17). The SPD accepts that they are usually the simplest way to extend a home. In paragraph 5.3 it sets normal maximum depths of a rear extension (Figure 2 in respect of a semi-detached dwelling), and paragraph 5.12 sets the aim of minimising bulk, set under a pitched roof, generally hipped, and set at right angles to the main roof.
8. These are general guidelines that normally should be followed, but each individual case must be assessed on its individual merits. The main thrust of the guidance is that any extension should be designed to relate well with the host dwelling and its neighbours, not stand out as visually overwhelming the existing, and respecting and relating well with the built forms around it.
9. By itself, I consider that the ground floor extension, including its width, would be reasonably satisfactory in its context with the existing dwelling and its neighbours. It is the first floor above that presents difficulties. Its width and the comparatively large hipped roof would not be subservient to the present house. Added to its bulk and scale, in this context, the hipped roof is very much visually at odds with the general built form of the run of dwellings. Whilst there is a hipped roof on No.112, 3 houses away to the north-west, the general form of outriggers and other rear extensions in the immediate vicinity is that of gables, or 'half' gables as on No.108. The mono-pitch roof on this neighbour makes for a particularly difficult juxtaposition to resolve.
10. The roof of this next-door outrigger, in addition to being of a mono-pitch form, is quite low, so that the first floor accommodation appears to be set partly in the roof space. Thus the apex of the triangle of this roof would be at a level not far above the eaves of the first floor of the appeal proposal. This means that the proposed hip roof would slope away from a point almost touching, allowing for guttering, and just below the outrigger's peak. This relationship would be visually unsatisfactory.
11. Turning to the matter of living conditions, there are objections submitted by both immediate neighbours. The officer's report notes, in respect of No.104, that the proposed first floor does not accord with the council's guidance in the SPD, and considers that there would be an unacceptable impact on the amenity of this neighbour by a reduction of available light into the first floor rear windows. However, in view of the physical characteristics of the proposed extensions and those of the immediate neighbours, as described above, I am not persuaded that the living conditions of either neighbour would be harmed to a material extent.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons that I have set out in paragraphs 7 to 10 above, I conclude that the proposed first floor extension would be harmful to the appearance of the existing dwelling and built form of the neighbouring houses. This would affect the rear garden environment of the host dwelling itself and that of the neighbours. The London Plan 2021, the Havering Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) all have policies that require good design. Section 12 of the Framework is headed 'Achieving well-designed and beautiful places', the opening paragraph of which states: "*131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*".
13. The fact that this proposal is within the rear garden area does not mean that these standards of design should not be expected. In this case, for the reasons given, the 2-storey extension proposed would not meet the expected quality that government and local policy expects.
14. The appellant's appeal statement makes reference to a number of policies in the Framework and the local plan. I have taken account of these other elements of policy, particularly those in the Framework such as making efficient use of land. However, there is no objection to the principle of adding accommodation to the rear of a dwelling, and indeed there is support in the SPD for such development. But it is the matters that I have dealt with that are decisive in this case.
15. For the reasons I have given, the appeal will be dismissed.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR