



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2024

by K L Robbie BA (Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/W/23/3326338

22 Firs Lane, Southgate N21 3ES

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Hamid Reza Esfandiarinezhad against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 22/03571/FUL dated 16 November 2022 was refused by notice dated 5 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is the subdivision of the site and erection of one residential unit involving an extension to the existing dwelling at 22 Firs Lane and alterations to the existing hip roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in December 2023. This does not materially change the planning policy context in respect of the main issues, and I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. 22 Firs Lane is a modestly proportioned two-storey end terrace property located within an established residential area. The area is characterised by short rows of terraces and pairs of semi-detached dwellings of similar design, age and character on relatively uniformly sized plots with soft and hard landscaped front gardens.
5. This part of Firs Lane is characterised by a strong sense of harmony where properties appear to share common origins. They typically feature principally red brick ground floor facades accentuated by rendered first floors, consistent with early twentieth century architecture. The terraces are symmetrically designed with the central properties having inset porches and the end properties infilled corner porches and hipped roofs with gable features on the front elevation. The frontages of the properties within the terrace containing the appeal property appear to be largely unaltered. The side garden of the appeal property is currently unused and unkempt, nevertheless it contributes to the sense of spaciousness on the junction with Ridge Road.

6. The proposal before me seeks to extend the existing property with a gabled roof extension, single storey rear extension and a two-storey side extension which would form a separate dwelling. The scheme as a whole would represent a substantial addition to the property, the side extension element of which would unbalance its existing symmetry and sense of balance and proportion that is inherently aesthetically pleasing and distinctive. I was unable to identify similar extensions of such scale in the surrounding area. In my view, given the location of the site and proximity to the junction of Firs Lane and Ridge Road, the scheme would be highly visible from public vantage points, and as a result, it would harmfully erode the characteristic relationship of properties to their plots that prevails here.
7. The extension to the side would be set back from the main building line of the terrace but it would be almost as wide as the existing dwelling, with its front corner very close to the pavement edge and front door in the side elevation. The excessive width and uncharacteristic side entrance in a prominent position on the junction would result in a form of residential development that would not be sympathetic to the character of this suburban residential street. Moreover, the gabled roof form would be a bulky addition to the existing roof form especially given its end of terrace location. In such a context of consistency of form and design, as described above, the scheme would appear harmfully incongruous context. It would therefore not represent a high quality of design and taken as a whole, the proposed extension would, in my view, appear as an unsympathetic extension to the host property and would be discordant in the wider area.
8. The development would necessitate the removal of at least 4 trees from within the side garden which provide a pleasant, verdant feature at the end of the terrace where they make an important contribution to the character and quality of the suburban environment here. Their removal would further exacerbate the stark prominence of the proposal on the junction. Three car parking spaces would be provided to the rear of the property with their access onto Ridge Road where their siting close to a pleasant triangle of grass on the junction would contribute to the cramped appearance of the development on the appeal site.
9. For these reasons, the proposal would be a disproportionate and bulky addition in a prominent location which would cause harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property, and which would also adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and more specifically the distinctive row of houses which the appeal property sits. It would conflict with Policy CP30 of The Enfield Plan Core Strategy 2010-2025, Policies DMD6, DMD7, DMD14 and DMD37 of the Development Management Document 2014 and Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021. Amongst other things and when taken as a whole, these policies require development to be of a high quality of design, scale and form is appropriate to the existing pattern of development and is appropriate in its context. There would also be conflict with the design objectives of the Framework in seeking to achieve well designed places.

Other Matters

10. Whilst I agree that the appeal site is currently unkempt, it is not so harmful as to justify the harm I have identified above. I note too that the council has not raised any objection to the living conditions of existing occupiers of neighbouring properties or future occupiers of the proposed dwelling, that the

appeal property or neighbouring buildings are not designated heritage assets, and the proposal would not affect strategic views. These are all neutral factors which do not outweigh the harm that I have found on the main issue.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. Whilst I recognise that the proposal would result in the provision of one additional dwelling and would represent an efficient use of land. However, given the scale of the development any contribution towards housing supply or mix would be limited. As a consequence, the weight that this carries in support of the proposal is reduced. There would be some economic benefits associated with supporting amenities and services in the area, although again this would be limited given the quantum of development proposed. There would be some economic benefit from construction employment, but this would be short lived. These factors are not therefore sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified above.
12. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise. Therefore, for the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

K L Robbie

INSPECTOR