

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2024

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09.05.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/D/24/3336999

24 Gloucester Road, Edmonton, London N18 1HL

- 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 & Mrs Shawn & Sonia Douglas against the decision of Enfield Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01597/HOU, dated 26 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is a rear single storey extension and internal alterations to lower ground floor level to create front reception with access from street level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The council's concerns relate to the works proposed to the front of the dwelling and their impact on the character and appearance of the area. The forecourt is narrow so it would need to be entirely excavated to provide for both the steps and the access to the proposed basement door. Although some nearby forecourts include planting within them, this is not generally the case. The excavation of the light well would not therefore significantly change the appearance of the property.
 4. The proposed plans of the front elevation show the excavated area and steps as a cross section. This does not demonstrate whether the existing front wall would be retained, although I have assumed that it would. It does however demonstrate that a stair balustrade would extend significantly above the existing wall height. The floor plan does not show the width of the boundary wall, only a boundary line, which I assume to be an error. The plan suggests that there would only be a balustrade to the house side or the steps. The balustrade shown does not extend beyond the steps which would be necessary for safety reasons. What appears to be a balustrade to the existing front door is shown on the floor plan. Such a feature would be necessary for safety reasons adjacent to the light well. The floor plan appears to suggest that this balustrade would extend to the street meaning that access to the light well
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steps and the existing front door would be separate, requiring the removal of part of the boundary wall. I have assumed that this is in error but have considered both options. The proposed and existing cross-sections and side elevations do not assist in this matter. Given the very limited space for both stairs and access passageways, I am particularly concerned that the plans omit the detail of the boundary wall and all of the necessary safety barriers. This leaves concerns with regard to whether the proposal would adequately function but also, as the safety barriers would be the most prominent features, I am concerned that these are not fully or accurately depicted or detailed.

5. If the proposal is for a barrier from the front door to the street, as shown on the layout plan, there would then be a second access to the basement stairs, resulting in the loss of part of the front wall. The loss of part of the wall and the reduction in the screening offered by it, together with the exposed and undefined detail of the balustrades and safety features, would be likely to detract from the appearance of this property. Retaining the wall and gaining access from the existing path to the front door, would allow for better screening of the safety infrastructure behind but, I also consider that this too would be harmful.
6. Although raised as a concern by the council in the delegated report, the appellants have not sought to address the issue of bin storage at the property. Whilst the storage of bins in the existing forecourt is not ideal, there appears to be no other option at present. The storage of bins at the lower level would offer some benefits but this would seem to be an entirely impractical solution given their size and weight, particularly when full. In this respect the proposal does not appear to function satisfactorily and therefore, it represents poor design. Without a place identified for the bins, this increases my concerns with regard to the appearance of the proposal overall.
7. The works to the front would offer an additional room and provide some borrowed light to the existing basement, although the proposed family room would have a poor outlook. It has not been explained why the additional access would be necessary to this single dwellinghouse given the rear basement access proposed. It is unclear therefore why this extra room could not be created without the need for the steps, as this would also improve the outlook and reduce the clutter of safety features. As it is not clear what benefit the steps would provide, their provision does not outweigh the harm that would result from the associated infrastructure required to support them.
8. Given the above, the proposal would conflict with the design objectives of policies D3.D(1, 11 & 12) of The London Plan 2021; policy CP30 of the Core Strategy 2010-2025 (2010); and policies DMD6(a & c) and DMD37 of the Development Management Document 2014. There would also be conflict with the *National Planning Policy Framework* 2023 as the development would not function well or add to the overall quality of the area.
9. Reference has been made to similar works within this road. It has not been stated when these works were carried out or the particular circumstances that led to their development. They do not suggest that this proposal would be acceptable. The appeal granted at 26 Harlech Road, Southgate, relates to a property with an entirely different forecourt arrangement.

10. Overall, the plans are not sufficiently detailed or complete to demonstrate the full nature of the works within this small forecourt. In any event, it has not been demonstrated that the works would be satisfactory with regard to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst there would be some benefits from the improved accommodation and the economic activity required to complete it, the matters that weigh in favour of the proposal are not sufficient to outweigh my concerns. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR