



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2024

by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/23/3330679

13-15 Woodhall Crescent, Hornchurch RM11 3NN

- 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 David Edwards against the decision of London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref is P0823.23.
 - The development proposed is described as the separation of semi-detached properties with hip to gable on each unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the separation of semi-detached properties with hip to gable on each unit at 13-15 Woodhall Crescent, Hornchurch RM11 3NN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P0823.23, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Elevations, Roof Plan and Block Plan – Drawing Number DE.04.23; Proposed Floor Plan and Section – Drawing Number DE.03.23; Proposed Floor Plan No. 13 – Drawing Number DE.05.23; Existing and Proposed Street Scene – Drawing Number DE.10.23.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, no window or other opening (other than those shown on the submitted and approved plans) shall be formed in the newly formed flank (side) walls hereby permitted, unless specific permission under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has first been sought and obtained in writing from the local planning authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host properties and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a pair of semi-detached bungalows. Both properties have forward projecting elements with gable roofs with sloping, hipped, roofs to the side. This side of Woodhall Crescent is predominantly made up of semi-detached bungalows, whilst the opposite side is predominantly made up of semi-detached houses. The surrounding area is characterised by properties of various designs and sizes and many of the properties have been extended or altered.
4. The proposed development would involve the separation of the existing pair of properties so that each resulting property would be a detached bungalow. This would be achieved by the demolition of a small part of no. 15 that would result in the creation of a small gap between the properties. An alteration is proposed to the roof of each property so that there would be a gable roof extending to the side elevation of each property.
5. I observed on my site visit that the bungalows on this section of the street, whilst of a similar scale and height, are not of a uniform design. The proposed alterations would therefore not interrupt a consistent design approach, nor would they appear incongruous. The bungalows, together with those on the appeal site, are relatively linear in form so that the roof alterations would not be highly exposed to the street-scene nor overly discernible. The Council describe the properties as being on a hill on a slight bend in the road and this would result in the alterations being clearly visible. From my observations on my site visit, the description of the street being on a hill is rather exaggerated, even if there is a slight incline. And whilst there is a slight bend in the road it is not highly noticeable. Even though the alterations would be visible, due to their design, siting, scale and bulk, would not appear overly prominent or dominant.
6. I also observed that a similar roof alteration has been undertaken at no. 7, and a gable roof with small hips exists at nos. 25 and 27. There are also several properties, including bungalows with similar roof forms towards the upper section of Woodhall Crescent. These existing alterations demonstrate the variation that exists in the street. The proposed roof forms would be consistent with the design of the gable roofs that are used on the front projections to each property and would not increase the height of the property or considerably add to its scale and mass. Given the existing gaps to the sides of each property that would be retained, the general sense of spaciousness that exists would not be harmed.
7. I acknowledge that the resulting detached properties would be inconsistent with the predominant form of semi-detached properties. Whilst the street is a pleasant residential street, the positive aspects of it would not be harmed through the formation of two detached properties. This is particularly in this case whereby a small gap would be created that would not be highly noticeable from much of the street, partly due to the obscuration caused by the forward projections from each property. I also observed that there are a small number of detached properties on the street, albeit of a different design and size.
8. The Council consider that the proposed development would lead to a harmful precedent for similar developments on this side of the road. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would be acceptable, I can see no reason why it would lead to harmful developments on other sites in the area. Furthermore, each application must be determined on its own individual planning merits.

9. The Council have referred to a planning appeal¹ which they consider has similarities with the proposed development. I do not have full details of the case to give it significant weight, however the evidence shows that the proposed development was quite different in that case which sought to replace one detached bungalow with a pair of semi-detached houses.
10. The proposed development would therefore not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host properties or the surrounding area. It would comply with Policy 26 of the Havering Local Plan (2021) and Policy D4 of the London Plan (2021). Collectively, these policies require that development is of high-quality design which respects, reinforces and complements the local street-scene having regard to the local identity and character.
11. The development would also comply with the general design principles of the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2011) insofar that careful consideration should be given to the effect of the development on the character of the original house and the wider street scene.

Other Matters

12. I note third party representation referring to parking concerns. The proposed development would not result in any additional dwellings being created and there is no loss of on-street or off-street parking as a result of the development. The impact from parking of vehicles of tradesmen would be minor given the scale of the development and would be temporary. There is no substantive evidence to show that the appeal should be dismissed due to highways or parking impacts. I therefore give these matters limited weight in the appeal.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty.
14. It is also necessary to impose a planning condition requiring the use of external materials to match those used in the host property. This is in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. In the interests of living conditions with regard to privacy, a condition is necessary to prevent the installation of windows in the resulting side elevations to be formed.
15. The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) outlines that planning conditions should not be used to restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so. There is no clear justification for doing so in this case.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/B5480/W/21/3273570