
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2024

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4TH June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/24/3340446

7 Barn Hill, Wembley, Brent, HA9 9JX

- 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 T Khimani against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 23/3485, dated 1 November 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2024.
 - The development proposed is part single storey front and rear extension, part two storey side and rear extension, loft conversion with dormer and basement (demolition of existing detached garage).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are its effect on the character and appearance of the area and on the living conditions of residents.

Reasons

3. 7 Barn Hill is a two storey detached house in an established residential area within the Barn Hill Conservation Area. The character of the area stems from the substantial, mainly detached two storey houses and bungalows set out in spacious plots in a fairly regular pattern along the streets, with individual buildings often staggered at an angle to the street. They are designed in the Arts and Crafts style, displaying common themes of mock Tudor detailing, strong projecting gables with overhanging eaves over full height bays and a mix of brick, render, half-timbering and tile hanging.
4. The relevant policies in this case include DMP1 and BHC1 of the Brent Local Plan (2019-2041) adopted 2022 (the local plan) which require development to, among other things, be of good design and conserve the significance of heritage assets by, for example, respecting and reinforcing the street scene and contributing to local distinctiveness.
5. Also relevant are the Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide (2013) and the SPD2 Residential Extensions Design Guide Document (2018) (SPD2) which contain additional detailed advice regarding matters such as the siting and size of extensions and garages. Side extensions and garages should be set back from the main front elevation and rear extensions should be limited to a single storey and be no wider than the width of the original house.

Character and appearance

6. The Council raises no objection to the proposed rear dormer window, the basement or the raised patio and I see no reason to disagree with this.
7. I consider that the height, width and siting of the proposed two storey side extension are such that it would result in a disproportionate addition to the building. The additional gabled element with bay window projecting forward from the original main front elevation to the same building line as the main gable and bay would appear unduly prominent in the context of the strong architectural feature of the main front gable. This would be emphasised by the integral garage at ground floor level which would also project forward to the same building line as the existing front bay. The solid garage door would appear as a prominent and somewhat alien feature in the context of the Arts and Crafts style of the house compared with the modest presence of the current garage which is set well back from the building line.
8. The impact of the two storey extension would be exacerbated by the width, size, design and siting of the proposed single storey front extension, including the porch. There would be an awkward juxtaposition between the splayed windows and wall of the existing bay and the straight wall of the new extension and also where the pitched roof would join the tile hanging of the existing bay on one side and that of the proposed bay over the garage.
9. The existing character and appearance of the house is of a simple straight half-timbered front elevation with a strong forward projecting gable and bay. The combination of the various elements of the proposed two storey side and single storey front extensions would result in a somewhat busy frontage which would fill the width of the site and dilute the existing character of the house.
10. The ground floor level at the rear of the house is raised above the garden level due to the slope of the land across the site from the front to the rear and from north to south. The proposed rear extension would replace an existing single storey flat roof extension which is of no architectural merit. The ground floor element would extend approximately 4m from the original rear elevation and in this respect would be acceptable in accordance with the Council's Design Guide. However, both it and the proposed first floor element, also with a maximum depth of 4m, would extend the full width of the original house and the proposed side extension. This would result in an excessively large and bulky element in the context of the modest proportions of the existing house.
11. The rear extension would not be readily visible from the public domain, though it would be visible from numerous viewpoints from neighbouring properties. It would have two hipped gables and other references to the prevailing architectural detailing in the area. However, I consider that this does not mitigate the adverse impact of its overall size, scale and siting which would be out of keeping with the original building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
12. There is a rhythm in the pattern of development along the streets in the conservation area arising from stepped frontages and orientation to the road and recurring features such as projecting gables and bays and half-timbering. This rhythm is less evident along the street in the vicinity of the appeal site due to the number of side streets which break up the pattern of development into blocks of four houses, as is the case with No.7, which together with No.5, faces

Barn Hill in a row of four houses with the other two on corners facing the side streets.

13. A large proportion of the two storey houses nearby have a single projecting full height gable and where there is a second one, this tends to be smaller and subservient to the main one. Many of the properties in the conservation area have been altered and extended with varied results, not all of which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. I accept that the proposal incorporates architectural details which are typical of the conservation area and that No.5 has been used as an example to inform the design of this proposal. However, I understand that the side extension to No.5 was permitted in 1987 before the conservation area was designated in 1990. Although it reflects the architectural detailing characteristic of the area, I consider that it appears as something of an anomaly in the context of other properties in the area because of its width, scale and overall size within the plot and it is not necessarily a good example to follow here.
14. I consider that the proposal would result in a building which would appear excessively bulky and out of keeping with the area. It would fill most of the width of the site and thereby reduce the sense of spaciousness which contributes to the quality of the conservation area.
15. The proposal includes new windows which in terms of their detailed design do not replicate that of the original windows. They would therefore fail to respect the character and appearance of the host building itself and the wider conservation area. I consider that this matter could be resolved by the imposition of a condition on a planning permission, requiring further details.
16. In overall conclusion I find that the combination of the proposed two storey side and rear extensions and the single storey front extension would result in an excessively wide and bulky form of development which would detract from the original design of the house and harm the character and appearance of the house itself and the wider conservation area, contrary to local plan policies DMP1 and BHC1, the SDP2 and the Conservation Area Design Guide.

Living conditions

17. The proposed two storey rear extension would project approximately 4m from the original rear elevation of the house in close proximity to the side boundary with No. 5 which lies to the south of No.7. The rear elevation of No.5 is stepped beyond that of No. 7, but at first floor level the proposed extension would project beyond the rear elevation of No. 5, with its first floor windows. The appellant has submitted a sunlight and daylight assessment which concluded that neither this nor other windows in nearby properties would experience an unacceptable loss of light.
18. I conclude that the proposal would not result in loss of light to the neighbouring properties and that in this respect, it is consistent with the Council's SPD2.
19. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR