



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2024

by Mark Philpott BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/24/3350460

16 Michelham Gardens, Twickenham, Richmond Upon Thames TW1 4SB

- 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 Neil and Hannah Warwick against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref is 24/1019/HOT.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The site includes an end of terrace dwelling which features a single storey side projection with a monopitched roof that extends up to the eaves of the first floor. No 18 is an adjacent, similar end of terrace dwelling which also includes a side projection but with a first floor extension above it. A narrow footpath runs between the two dwellings and to the rear of many of the properties in Michelham Gardens. Despite No 18's first floor extension, there is a clear gap between the terraces as a result of the footpath together with the space above No 16's side projection. Mature trees are visible beyond the properties through the gap and above the ridgelines.
4. There is limited variety in the designs of the dwellings in Michelham Gardens which results in a highly cohesive streetscene. It also feels compact due to the limited separation distances between properties and the lengths of the terraces. In that context, gaps present between dwellings along Michelham Gardens are important in providing relief to the built form, particularly to the western side of the highway where mature trees are visible beyond them like with the gap between Nos 16 and 18. Accordingly, the site contributes positively to the character and appearance of the locality.
5. Paragraph 5.2.3 of the Council's House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out that development which would result in a significant reduction of an existing important gap between neighbouring houses can have a terracing effect and will not normally be acceptable. Consequently, it advises that a two storey side extension should be sited a metre from a side boundary.

6. The proposed first floor side extension would project close to the site's boundary and the footpath between Nos 16 and 18. It would result in the perceived loss of much of the gap between the dwellings and obscure the trees when viewed from the highway due to its position, size and height. A terracing effect would also occur in angled views when travelling along the highway. The outcome of this is that the site's contribution to the character and appearance of the area would be diminished.
7. I note that several properties in Michelham Gardens have undergone side extensions but the circumstances of those are not directly comparable to this appeal scheme. For example, though a side extension akin to the one proposed is located at No 31, there is not a corresponding extension at No 33 and so a sufficient gap has been retained. It is a similar case for the extension permitted at No 40¹. Additionally, the extensions at Nos 54 and 60 are at the ends of a terrace that benefits from more generous spaces to its sides as a result of its angled position, whereas the one at No 64 is next to the relatively spacious rear garden of a property on Strawberry Vale. I have also been referred to allegedly comparable schemes elsewhere in the borough, but different streets have varying qualities and sensitivities, and thus capacities for development, and hence do not justify the harm identified in this case.
8. The proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. It thereby conflicts with policy LP1 of the Council's Local Plan which requires development to respect, contribute to and enhance the local environment and character, including through consideration of the spaces between buildings. It also conflicts with the guidance in the SPD and section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which specifies that development should be sympathetic to local character. The Council also contends that the proposal is contrary to London Plan policy D4, but this relates to the use of tools for delivering good design and does not set out criteria for schemes specifically, so I find no conflict with it. Nevertheless, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole for the reasons given.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above the appeal should be dismissed.

Mark Philpott

INSPECTOR

¹ Council reference: 24/0255/HOT