



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2024 by A Khan BSc (Hons) MA MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/23/3334666

147 Alma Avenue, Hornchurch, Havering RM12 6BS

- 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 Sonia Begum against the decision of the Council of London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref is P1094/23.
 - The development proposed is single storey side/rear extension with front porch and construction of stair case to use the loft space as office and storage area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised during the life of the appeal. The substantive elements thereof as they relate to the appeal scheme have not changed. I am therefore satisfied that there is no need to seek the views of the main parties.
4. Although some works were under way when I visited the site, that is not a matter for me to consider for this appeal and I shall make my recommendation on the basis of the plans considered by the Council.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site is located in a residential area with one and two-storey semi-detached dwellings. In particular, the single-storey properties are generally characterised by their similar design and built form, with gabled bay windows. Semi-detached dwelling pairs typically share a largely symmetrical frontage. The properties are set back from the road, sharing a consistent front building line. Corner plots which frame junction approaches are typically open. This, together with the regular degree of spacing between properties, provide rhythm to the street scene, giving the area a pleasant suburban feel.

7. The appeal property has a symmetrical façade to the dwelling it forms a pair with, and is set within an open corner plot, which is in keeping with the dwelling design of the street scene and contributes to its open, suburban nature. Therefore, the appeal site has a positive effect on the character and appearance of the area.
8. The proposed extension would span a significant width of the corner plot and the side extension flank wall would be set back less than one metre from the back edge of the footway. The increased massing and bulk of the proposal would create a disproportionate addition to the appeal site which would dominate the street scene. Therefore, the proposal would be highly visible from the public realm, and this would erode the openness of the corner plot at the junction approach to Goodwood Avenue. The vegetation and fencing would not be sufficient to mitigate the harm caused by the proposed extension. The proposal would disrupt the open character of the corner plot and have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the wider area.
9. The roof design plays an important part in the symmetry of semi-detached pairs in the area. The proposal would extend the roof over the side extension and alter the principal façade with two additional gable features over the proposed bay window and door entrance. The increased roof mass would add significant bulk to the appeal property, which, along with the principal elevation alterations, would unbalance the symmetry with the adjoining dwelling, 145 Alma Avenue (No 145). The proposed roof alterations would also create a top heavy appearance, which would be harmful to the host property and compound the erosion of symmetry with No 145.
10. My attention has been drawn to other properties which have been extended in the vicinity of the appeal site. I do not have the full details of the circumstances which led to the construction of the developments at 133, 149, 187 and 189 Alma Avenue and cannot therefore be certain that they represent a direct parallel to or reflect the circumstances of the proposal before me. Therefore, these examples hold very limited weight in the consideration of this appeal.
11. For these reasons, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the development would be contrary to the Havering Local Plan 2016 - 2031 (2021) (LP) Policy 7, which requires that residential development should be of a high design quality. The development would also be contrary to LP Policy 26, which requires development to respect the distinctive qualities of the local area and established frontages.
12. Furthermore, the development would also be contrary to the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted 2011) (SPD) Sections 4.17 and 4.19. These state that alterations to the front elevation, i.e. roof form, can upset the balance and harmonious appearance of neighbouring properties, as well as interrupt the rhythm of the street. It would also be contrary to SPD Section 6.12, which states the side extension flank wall of corner properties must be set back at least one metre from the back edge of the footway.

Other Matters

13. Although retaining a one metre side gap would reduce the proposed bedroom width, this carries limited weight as there is no evidence that alternate room positioning has been explored. In addition, the argument that the reduction to the proposed side extension would alter the proposed bay window width, thereby unbalancing the overall symmetry, carries limited weight as alternate elevation designs could be considered to maintain symmetry. Furthermore, whilst the proposed roof design would provide additional storage space on the first floor, this does not outweigh the harm caused by the bulk of the extension and symmetry disruption to the principal façade.
14. The appellant mentions permitted development rights for residential extensions being a material consideration, though limited information has been provided in this respect. On this basis, I cannot be certain that the use of permitted development rights represents a fallback position, which would have similar or worse effects than the appeal proposal. This consideration has consequently been afforded very limited weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Khan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR