



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2024

by **R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th January 2025

Appeal Reference: **APP/N5090/D/24/3353133**

65 Grove Road, Barnet EN4 9DJ

- 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. M. Shah against the decision of the Barnet London Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 24/2385/HSE.
 - The development proposed is “two storey side extension; single storey front extension with new access ramp and associated steps; demolition of the existing outbuilding”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for “two storey side extension; single storey front extension with new access ramp and associated steps; demolition of the existing outbuilding”, at 65 Grove Road, Barnet EN4 9DJ, in accordance with the terms of the application (reference 24/2385/HSE), subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Preliminary points

2. The description of the proposed development that is given in the planning application form dated 11 June 2024 includes reference to a “new side garage”. The appeal drawings do not include details of any such garage, however, and reference is made to “amended plans and description”. It is recorded that the amended description was agreed between the main parties.
3. Notwithstanding the description of the application that was given in the application form, therefore, the nature of the proposed development can more clearly be expressed as set out in the Council’s decision notice and in the appeal form, as follows: “two storey side extension; single storey front extension with new access ramp and associated steps; demolition of the existing outbuilding”. That is the description that I have adopted in the banner heading, above.
4. The ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ was revised in December 2024 but, in this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions that have been made to it. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised ‘Framework’, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action. In this appeal, I have had regard to the most recent version, of course.

Main issue

5. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is located in a residential area to the north-west of the shopping area (and railway station) at New Barnet. The surroundings to the appeal site are suburban in character, typified by semi-detached houses set back from the roadside behind modest front gardens, with more substantial back gardens. The houses are generally constructed in traditional forms, predominantly of brickwork with pitched roofs. The locality benefits from trees and shrubs in front gardens that create a verdant townscape, while in Grove Road itself, the townscape is enhanced by shrubs in the roadside verges.
7. Number 65 Grove Road stands at the corner of Grove Road and Northfield Road, where it occupies the corner plot alongside number 1 Northfield Road. These two properties have larger triangular plots with space at the side of the houses and larger front garden areas. The side areas of the garden include various single-storey structures.
8. There are some larger, more modern buildings in Grove Road, opposite these corner plots. The site on the opposite corner of Grove Road and Northfield Road is obviously derelict, identified on the Ordnance Survey site plan as 'The Jester' public house.
9. The existing house at Number 65 Grove Road is a two-storey semi-detached house (together with number 63), constructed of brickwork under a hipped roof, with a two-storey front bay and an outbuilding alongside the house itself. There is space for vehicle parking on the front garden area.
10. It is now proposed to construct a two-storey side extension to the house, together with a single storey front extension. A new access ramp and associated steps would provide access to the front door. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing outbuilding.
11. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new development.
12. Policies in the Development Plan also share these basic principles and attention is drawn to Policies in 'Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document' (which is dated September 2012) and 'Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document' (which is also dated September 2012).
13. Policy CS1 in the 'Core Strategy' sets out the way in which the Council's "place shaping strategy" is intended to concentrate and consolidate housing and

economic growth in sustainable locations. Policy CS5 is aimed at promoting good standards of design that respects local context and distinctive local character, to “enhance the borough’s high quality suburbs”, among other things. Policy DM01 in the ‘Development Management Policies’ likewise seeks to achieve high quality design.

14. The Council’s ‘Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance’ (dated October 2016) is also relevant but it does not have the force of the statutory Development Plan. Section 14 deals with “extensions to houses” and it includes some specific design criteria.
15. The proposed development would primarily be in the form of an addition to the side elevation of the existing house, occupying the space between the house and its angled side boundary. The existing single-storey outbuilding would be removed but it is not of any particular architectural or townscape merit and its loss need not be regretted.
16. The two-storey part of the proposed extensions would be set back from the existing main front elevation of the house, with single-storey parts on the altered front elevation and along the side elevation, close to the boundary with number 1 Northfield Road. Architecturally, the new construction would be in harmony with its host building, making use of matching materials (which would be subject to condition) and similar design features. The single storey part would include a small area of flat roof and the junction between the existing bay and the new porch would be somewhat awkward. Those elements would not be unduly intrusive or unattractive in the context of the scheme as a whole, however.
17. The proposed development would create a clearly asymmetrical appearance to the existing semi-detached pair of houses and it would reduce the sense of visual openness at the corner of Grove Road and Northfield Road. Evidently, the streetscene would be altered. The proposed new extensions would be wider than half the width of the existing building, although the Council’s design guidance indicates that “side extensions should not be more than half the width of the original house”.
18. On the other hand, the openness of the corner plots does not make a particular contribution to the townscape, in my view, while the overall design of the finished house would be in keeping with the streetscene and would not harm the character or appearance of the existing building or its surroundings. The change in the appearance of the locality and the increased density of development would not conflict with the broader design policies and the scheme would be in accord with policies that are aimed at focussing new development on existing sustainable locations.
19. The appeal scheme would amount to an extension to the existing dwelling that would provide useful additional space and would, thereby, add to the stock of residential accommodation in the locality, albeit in a very limited way. I have concluded that the project would not be in conflict with national planning policies or with the Development Plan as a whole, and that it is acceptable in planning terms. In short, I am persuaded that the scheme before me can properly be permitted, subject to conditions, and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

20. I have, however, also considered the need for conditions and, in imposing conditions, I have taken account of the conditions suggested by the Council in the usual way (without prejudice to their main arguments in the appeal).
21. I have concluded that conditions are necessary, to define the planning permission and to ensure that quality is maintained by requiring the use of matching materials in the exterior of the new construction. An additional condition is needed, in my view (and as suggested in the submissions), to ensure that the rear first floor window in the new extension (to serve a large “walk-in-wardrobe”) would not intrude on the privacy of the adjoining property.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:
 - drawing number 01 (Existing Ground Floor Plans);
 - drawing number 02B (Proposed Ground Floor Plans);
 - drawing number 03B (First Floor Plans);
 - drawing number 04B (Elevations);
 - drawing number 05B (Front Elevations).
- 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) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the rear first floor window in the new extension (serving the new “Walk-in-Wardrobe”), has been fitted with obscured glazing, and no part of that window which is less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be capable of being opened. Details of the type of obscured glazing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the window is installed and once installed the obscured glazing shall be retained thereafter.