



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2025

by **Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/24/3352095

16 Hibbert Road, Harrow Weald, Harrow HA3 7JS

- 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 Marius Solovastru against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application reference is PL/1359/24.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of dwelling into two flats (2 X 2 bed); single and two storey rear extension; alterations to roof to form end gable and rear dormer with Juliette balcony; installation of two rooflights in front roof slope; front porch; external alterations; separate amenity space bin and cycle stores.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. On 12 December 2024, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework 2024) was published. The Framework 2024 does not raise any new matters that are determinative to the outcome of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The proposal is to extend, alter and convert the appeal property, which is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling, to form 2 self-contained flats. I saw that several buildings in the local area include sizeable extensions that are visible from either the site or the road and these vary in their scale, design and general appearance. There is, therefore, some variety to the built form within the area to which No 16 belongs.
5. The Council has recently confirmed that prior approval (PA) was not required for a 6 metre, deep single storey extension at the rear of No 16. It has also issued a lawful development certificate (LDC) for alterations to the roof of No 16 to form a gable end together with a rear dormer with a Juliette style balcony, 2 rooflights at the front and a new window in the gable end. These changes, which also form part of the proposal before me, could, therefore, come forward in any event.
6. The Council also raises no objection to the infill extension to the front porch or to the proposed conversion of the building to flats or to the subdivision of the back

garden to provide amenity space, as proposed. From the evidence, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion on each of these matters. Against that background, I shall therefore focus on the 2-storey part of the new rear extension and on the totality of the proposal.

7. The proposal, in essence, combines the PA and LDC schemes with a new first-floor rear extension. In itself, the first-floor component would be modest in scale, stretching across roughly half of the main rear wall. However, it would not be seen in isolation. It would be visually 'read' along with a large 'box-like' dormer just above and a sizeable ground floor rear extension below, both of which would include flat roofs that would accentuate their considerable width, scale and bulk.
8. When seen from the back garden of No 16, the rear elevation of the host building would be overwhelmed by the considerable scale and mass of the new additions. As a result, the proposal would not harmonise with the scale or the architectural style of the original house, which is expected of extensions in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Residential Design Guide* (SPD). Taken as a whole, the proposal would fail to achieve a sense of proportion and balance in relation to the host building and it would visually dominate the rear façade, in conflict with the advice contained within the SPD. As a result, the intrinsic character and appearance of the appeal dwelling would be spoiled.
9. I note that the appeal scheme was refined in the light of the Council's objections to an earlier application that was also refused. I also acknowledge that the rear extensions would not be readily visible from the road given their position at the back of the main house. Nevertheless, the upper part of the finished building would be evident from the back gardens of the adjacent properties, which also form part of the area's character as it is experienced by others. From these locations, the rear elevation of the finished dwelling would be seen along with the properties on either side of the site that both include large, prominent rear extensions. Even in that varied built context, the proposal would still draw the eye as an overly excessive and cumbersome enlargement of the appeal dwelling. While the Council found the roof level and ground floor rear extensions to be acceptable, these elements were assessed individually and the considerations that are taken into account differ to applications that seek planning permission.
10. It is true, as the appellant states, that some properties in the local area include box dormers and large rear projections and these form part of the character of the local area. However, none of the cases that I saw were the same or very similar to the development before me. In some instances, the existing extensions exemplify the harm to which I have referred and so do not lend support to the appeal scheme. Reference is also made to other appeal decisions that from the information provided differ in scale and design to the proposal and so are not directly comparable with it. In any event, it is a central planning principle that each proposal should be assessed on its own merits. Having done so, my own conclusion is that despite the use of appropriate external materials, the changes sought are of a scale and design that the character of the host dwelling would be unduly compromised and there would be a significant adverse impact on the visual character of the local area.
11. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. Accordingly, it conflicts with Policy D3.D of The London Plan, Core

Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy, Policy DM 1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Document and the guidance within the Council's SPD. Together, these policies and guidance promote a high standard of design and aim to ensure that development enhances the local context and that extensions respect their host building. The appeal scheme is also at odds with the policies of the Framework 20024 which, like its predecessor, states that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.

12. The proposal would make efficient use of the land available within the site. Once complete, it would add to the stock of residential units and the choice of accommodation for prospective occupiers. It would also intensify the use of a small site. All these matters are encouraged in policy terms. I note that no objection is raised to the quality of the accommodation that would be provided or to the arrangements for vehicle parking or in relation to bin and cycle storage. However, these considerations do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

13. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations, including those of the Framework 2024, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
14. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, including the absence of objections from others, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR