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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 April 2025 by M Long BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

**Decision by M Clowes BA (Hons) MCD PG CERT (Arch Con) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/25/3361083**

**69 Sycamore Road, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire WD3 3TE**

- 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 Mrs Aparna Tripathi (NorthPoint Planning UK) against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
  - The application Ref is 24/1341/FUL.
  - The development proposed is construction of single-storey front extension and first floor rear extension, conversion of garage into habitable accommodation and internal alterations, alterations to fenestration and extension of driveway.
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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.

### Procedural Matters and Main Issues

3. In the banner heading above, I have used the amended description of development set out on the appellant's appeal form and the Council's decision notice as it more accurately describes the appeal scheme.
4. The Council's reason for refusal identifies harm only in regard to the proposed single storey front extension and not the remainder of the appeal scheme. Therefore, I consider the main issues of this appeal to be;
  - the effect of the proposed single storey front extension on the character and appearance of the area; and
  - the living conditions of the occupiers of No 71 Sycamore Road, with particular regard to outlook.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

#### *Character and Appearance*

5. The site is in a residential area predominantly comprised of two-storey dwellings that share architectural commonalities in terms of their modest forms, flat roofs and external materials. Appendix B of the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan (2018) (CGNP) identifies this area as being in 'Character Area 5'. In particular it highlights the similarities between this 1960's estate with architecture designed by Eric Lyons including overhanging flat roofs, vertical tile hanging and horizontal proportions.

6. The appeal dwelling is positioned at the end of a short terrace of three properties that are similarly characterised by their simple forms, modest proportions and boxy shapes. There are some modest alterations to the front of the terrace, for instance the front entrance and garage door of the appeal dwelling are set flush with the front elevation, rather than set in like the other two dwellings. Nevertheless, the front elevation has a consistent design and clear building line, such that the appeal site contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The proposed single storey front extension would have a significant depth which, when seen in combination with its full width, would have an overly dominant scale. While its external materials, fenestration and flat roof would be reflective of its host, these elements would not sufficiently assimilate the forward projection of the extension beyond the consistent building line of the terrace.
8. Even though the neighbouring terraces do not form a uniform building line with the appeal terrace, the proposed extension would chiefly be viewed in the immediate context of its host and the appeal terrace. Despite its set back from the front boundary of the site, the open space to the front and sides of the appeal terrace would allow for clear views of the front extension where its large scale would be highly prominent and incongruous within the street scene. In such views, the proposal would not conserve or enhance the Character Area.
9. My attention is directed to single storey front extensions in the surrounding area, including examples on Sycamore Road and Valley Walk. The full details of these schemes are not before me and so I cannot be certain of the context in which they may have received planning permission. Nevertheless, I observed that many of these examples did not appear to be comparable to the appeal scheme in terms of both their depth and width. While some extensions, for instance, had substantial widths, they appeared to have comparably modest depths. Also, some examples were located on terraces with staggered front building lines and were tucked in next to side elevations that projected forward of their host, thus limiting their prominence. As such, these examples do not overcome my specific concerns raised above. Moreover, the presence of unsympathetic development would not justify further harm to the street scene.
10. I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (2013) (DMP LDD) which seek to protect the character of existing areas of housing and set out that front extensions should not be excessively prominent in the street scene. There would be conflict with the Core Strategy (2011) (CS), specifically Policies CP1 and CP12 which promote buildings of a high enduring design quality and proposals that have regard to the local context. It would also be contrary to Policy CA2 of the CGNP which resists extensions that have an adverse visual effect on the Character Area in which it is located. There would be additional conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to ensure development is sympathetic to local character.

### *Living Conditions*

11. The attached neighbour No 71, has a large kitchen window to its front elevation that is close to the shared boundary with the appeal site. The proximity of the proposed front extension would enclose the window to one side. However, it would be of

limited height and depth such that it would not appear overly excessive when viewed from the window at No 71. Due to the large size of the window and the open front garden, the kitchen would retain an open aspect. The neighbouring occupiers would thus retain a suitable quality of outlook.

12. I conclude that the proposed single storey front extension would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupiers at No 71, with particular regard to outlook. It would accord with Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the DMP LDD and Policy CP12 of the CS insofar as they relate to protecting residential amenity. There would be no conflict with the high standard of amenity requirements set out in the Framework.

### **Other Matters**

13. The appellant sought pre-application advice from the Council and the proposed front extension as submitted is unchanged. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is clear that pre-application advice cannot pre-empt the democratic decision-making process, or a particular outcome in respect of a formal planning application<sup>1</sup>. I have found harm with regard to the front extension on the character and appearance of the area for the reasons given, and in doing so, I have concurred with the views of the Planning Committee and Parish Council.
14. The scheme would provide additional space for home working, as well as improved living accommodation for occupiers of the appeal dwelling. However, these are private benefits to a single household which do not outweigh the identified harm.
15. I have had regard to other matters raised by interested parties comprising loss of light and privacy from the proposed front and rear extensions. I have not addressed these matters further as they would not be determinative to the outcome of the appeal.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

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

*M Long*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

17. I have considered all of the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis, the appeal is dismissed.

*M Clowes*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 20-011-20140306 of the PPG.