
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: 12th June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/25/3359388

19 Cecil Road, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 5QY

- 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 Ms Miller against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref is PL/2184/24.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with a rear dormer and outrigger dormer and roof lights to the front elevation.
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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.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal dwelling is situated in the middle of a short terrace of houses with rear gardens that back onto a wide area of multiple railway tracks. There is also some mature vegetation to the rear of these properties. Two-storey outriggers extend from each of the properties with a consistent and unmodified dual-pitched roofscape. Other housing types nearby similarly share plain, pitched roofs. As the appeal dwelling has modest, traditional proportions, it contributes positively to the character of the area.
5. The dominant scale of the proposal would appear as a bulky and top-heavy addition which would detract from the appreciation of the modest, traditional roof form of the host and the wider terrace. In particular, the extension to the outrigger would extend incongruously above the ridgeline of this part of the roof and, even with its set back from the rear elevation and matching external materials, would unbalance the host from the corresponding outrigger of its neighbour, 17 Cecil Road. Moreover, it would only be set down from the extension on the main rear slope by a short distance, thus disrupting the existing subordinate set down of the outrigger.

6. The appellant accepts that the proposal would conflict with Harrow Council's Residential Design Guide: Supplementary Planning Document (2010) (SPD). Amongst other things, this document, sets out that generally dormers should be subordinate features in the roof, should not overlap or wrap around the roof hips, and should never rise above the ridge.
7. While this SPD dates from a number of years ago, its purpose to achieve a consistently high standard of design and layout in residential development is relevant to the main considerations of this appeal. There may be roof extensions in the wider area that do not meet the detailed guidance set out in the SPD. However, this does not overcome my specific concerns relating to the dominant design of the proposal in this particular context, which I have identified would be harmful to local character.
8. I acknowledge that public views of the proposal would be very limited due to its position at the rear of the terrace, the screening effect from nearby vegetation, and the industrial and commercial nature of much of the surrounding land. There would, however, be some glimpsed views from passing trains as well as some private views from neighbouring properties. In any event, I do not consider that a lack of visibility obviates the need to achieve good design that responds well to its context. Indeed, Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
9. The Appellant sets out that an extension of similar, albeit marginally smaller proportions to the proposal could be constructed using permitted development (PD) rights. However, no further details relating to potential viable dimensions or formal confirmation, such as a lawful development certificate, have been provided. Therefore, I cannot be certain that a PD scheme would have a sufficiently comparable visual effect to the appeal proposal. It seems to me that any fallback position would be smaller and therefore the degree of harm less than the proposal before me.
10. My attention has been directed to a rear dormer development with similarities to the appeal scheme at 92 Herga Road¹. While in part, the Inspector found this scheme acceptable due to the lack of public views, it referenced the existence of an existing roof extension at 88 Herga Road which formed the context of that site. The Inspector also found that there were reasonable fallback options that carried significant weight.
11. In this appeal, however, dormers are not prevalent within the terrace or the wider area generally. In the isolated examples where they are found, they are simple dormers within the main roof slope, not extending onto outriggers. The examples at Herga Road are located some distance away meaning they are not viewed in the same context as the appeal site. As such, I consider that the planning circumstances of the appeal at 92 Herga Road are materially different to those before me and so do not justify allowing the appeal.
12. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy DM 1 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies (2013) which requires all development to achieve a high

¹ As granted on appeal, reference APP/M5450/C/19/3241958.

standard of design and layout and Core Policy CS 1 of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) which sets out that extensions should respect their host building. There would be additional conflict with The London Plan (2021), specifically Policy D3 which requires development proposals to respond to the existing character of a place.

Other Matters

13. The proposal would improve the standard of accommodation available to occupiers of the appeal dwelling. Nevertheless, this is a private benefit to a single household and does not outweigh the harm identified above.
14. The appellant suggests that the Council has failed in its duty to promote sustainable development. The Framework is clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a proposal conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not usually be granted unless material considerations indicate the plan should not be followed. I have found that the proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations to indicate I should take a different view.

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.

M Long

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

M Clowes

INSPECTOR