

74 TOLCARNE DRIVE, PINNER

Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for a single storey rear and side extension

Site and Surroundings

The application site is located on the south westerly side of Tolcarne Drive, Pinner and contains a two-storey semi-detached dwelling.

The house has been extended in the past to the side, at ground floor level, facing north-west. Immediately beyond and adjoining is a hardstanding served by a painted white solid garage door where there was previously a garage. These align with the front wall of the main house.

The house plot is wide at the front boundary to the road and at an angle, before it narrows along its western flank boundary to a much shorter rear garden boundary. The rear garden is significantly wider than neighbour properties in the street, which are in the main, much narrower and tightly packed together. As a result, the appeal site also has a wide area of garden along its front and to the side. The side of the plot beyond the garage door is screened by a 1.8m close boarded fence.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. Number 72C Tolcarne Drive is set well away north-west of the appeal site and sits far more rearwards into its plot. Conversely compared with the appeal site, it has a wide rear boundary that narrows to the front boundary where it approaches the road.

Number 76 Tolcarne Drive is located to the south-east of the application site and is the adjoining semi-detached dwelling. It has a rear extension up to the shared boundary with the appeal site and house.

Appeal Subject

As stated above, the appeal site benefits from a double garage structure to the side of the house, part of which has been partially demolished prior to the planning application having been submitted.

The applicant sought planning permission for the erection of a single storey side and rear extension which would replace the partially demolished garage. The proposed side extension would be of similar width and extend further rearwards to align with the main wall of the house. It would be finished at the front with a dummy pitched roof.

The proposed rear extension would have a depth of 4.00m and span across the rear of the main house and the retained garage, which would be converted from garage to habitable use that also includes changes to fenestration including a new window and brickwork.

Council Decision

Six neighbouring properties and Northwood Hills Resident Association were written to and no objections were received. Presumably, because the appeal subject will have very little impact on the street scene or the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring residential properties in the vicinity of the site.

The Council in refusing planning permission by notice dated 28 June 2024 clearly accept the proposed rear extension, but object to the proposed side extension because of its alleged harm to the character and appearance of the host building and therefore harm to the surrounding area. Specifically, the reason for refusal is as follows:

The proposed side extension by reason of overall size, scale and bulk would represent poor design which would not appear as subordinate to the host dwelling, particularly given the openness of the plot following removal of trees and landscaping within the front garden. The proposed side extension would therefore be detrimental to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and surrounding area, contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One Strategic (2012) and Policies DMDH 1, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020).

Grounds of Appeal

The Council's reason for refusal includes reference to four Local Plan policies from 2012.

All four basically want to ensure that any development fits into the locality and surrounding area and be of a good design in keeping with the main house and the street scene. There is no objection to this in principle and we feel it will do just exactly that, particularly compared with the poorer designed elements to be removed to make way for the proposed extension. Part of this has already been demolished, which was behind the garage door.

Policy DMHD 1 – Development Management policies is specific in relation to side extensions.

There is no requirement for a single storey extension to be set back from the front main wall of the house, particularly in this case as it is not two storey and not in a conservation area. It therefore complies with parts (iv) and (v).

Part (ii) extensions to corner plots should maintain the openness of the area. It certainly does this, being set well in from the side boundary, which is well screened by a 1.8m high close boarded fence. In fact, there is a considerable area of the plot to the side as well as to the front and rear, which will remain open and free from built development. It complies with part (ii).

The sole issue appears to be the width of the proposed side extension. Part (i) states that side extensions should not exceed half the width of the original property.

The proposed side extension would be 6.85m wide, which is wider than the original house. Whilst the advice in the policy is generally sound, its width is only just wider than the main front wall of the house. At single storey level, the proposal will not compete in scale to the main two storey house, being much lower in comparison.

It also replaces development as seen from the street scene of the same width. It may be marginally higher, but the proposed dummy pitch with a flat roof behind it satisfactorily finishes off the design and appearance of the proposal. Furthermore, the visual impact on the street scene of the proposal is significantly limited by the presence of the solid close boarded fence that runs immediately next to it and extends up to the front boundary before continuing in front, north-westwards up to the northernmost corner of the site.

Finally, the appeal site is much wider than the neighbouring plots and the proposed extension would be set well in from the side boundary and therefore not appear cramped or result in the plot looking over-developed.

The officers report states that the removal of trees from the site means that the proposed side extension would be more visible. The close boarded fence on the front boundary would help shield this though and given it is of good design, the harm cited by the Council would not occur.

To conclude, the proposal is of good design and scale, replacing previous built inferior designed additions. It will have only a limited visual impact on its surroundings, but where it can be seen, it will be a pleasing, well designed and in keeping with the house and its neighbours.

It therefore should not have been refused planning permission because the side extension complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan as follows:

The size and design of the side extension enhances the appearance of this locality, complying with Policy BE1.

It incorporates good design standards and therefore complies with policy DMHB 11.

It will integrate well to this residential road and its surroundings, such that its open character on this side of the appeal plot will be maintained, complying with policy DMHB 12.

Finally, for the reasons argued above, the side extension will not compete unduly with the host building, being the same width of what exists here along its frontage and be of an improved design and appearance. It will not set a precedent because no other house in the vicinity has the same plot size and garden width.

It is considered that the Council were wrong to refuse planning permission and the appeal should succeed for the reasons stated above.