
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2014

by M Brookes BA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 2 December 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/14/2227358

53 Dene Road, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 2DD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Joseph Gavan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 39106/APP/2014/1712 was refused by notice dated 24 July 2014.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension and the conversion of a garage to habitable use involving alterations to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main issues

2. The Council has raised no objection to the conversion of the garage or to the alterations to the front elevation and I agree that those aspects of the development are acceptable. The main issues therefore are the effect of the first floor extension on the character and appearance of the area and on living conditions at 55 Dene Road.

Reasons

Character and appearance of the area

3. The appeal site lies within an area that has been designated in the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan 1998 (UDP) as an Area of Special Local Character (ASLC), where the Council seeks to preserve certain elements of character and identity.
4. The Council has not identified those elements of character and identity of the Dene Road, Northwood ASLC that it wishes to preserve. However, ASLCs generally are subject to policies (BE5 and BE6) of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Saved UDP Policies (November 2012) (UDP2), which seek to ensure that new development is of a similar scale and reflects the materials, design features, architectural style and building heights predominant in the area. Policy BE5 also requires extensions to dwellings to respect the symmetry of the original dwelling.
5. My assessment of character and identity is that the appeal site is within an area on the east side of the southern end of Dene Road that is characterised by substantial detached houses set back from the road beyond grass verges and

deep, landscaped front gardens. In contrast with this spacious landscape setting to the front of the houses, many of the buildings are positioned quite close together. However there are gaps between the buildings at first floor level and above, which contribute to the setting of the individual houses and to the distinct identity, character and appearance of the area generally.

6. UDP2 Policy BE22 states that residential extensions and buildings of two or more storeys in height should be set back a minimum of 1 metre from the side boundary of the property for the full height of the building. The Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Extensions (2008) (SPD) elaborates how this policy will be applied. It advises that two-storey side extensions should be at least a metre from the side boundary and that, if a single storey part of the existing dwelling is within a metre of the boundary, any first floor extension should be a minimum of 1.5 metres from that boundary.
7. In this case, there is a single storey garage on the boundary of the property with 55 Dene Road over which the first floor extension would be constructed. This would also extend to the boundary and would clearly conflict with Policy BE22 and advice in the SPD. There are no material mitigating factors in this case because the side wall of the extension would be parallel with and as deep as the side wall of the house at 55 Dene Road, which is only about a metre from the boundary. The eaves of that adjacent house also project well beyond the side wall of the building.
8. The space between the two houses would be very small and because of the depth of both buildings there would be very limited views between them. The enlarged dwelling would appear unduly cramped in relation to its side boundary and the adjacent house. The first floor extension would therefore be harmful to the setting of both dwellings and to the character and appearance of the area.
9. The Council has also objected to the crown roof of the extension. The SPD advises (paragraph 5.9) that the design of the roof of a two-storey side extension should follow that of the existing roof. In this case, the crown roof would not be of the same form as the existing roof. However, it would not stand out as being different to the roof of the existing building, but would be an integral part of the extended building. Although not a form that is characteristic of the area, the crown roof would not be unique and the existence of an area of flat roof would not be evident in views from in front of the building. In other views from Dene Road the crown roof form would not be readily apparent, because it would be set well back from the road, would be partially screened by landscaping and the adjacent house at 55 Dene Road and would be partially disguised by the high and relatively short ridge lines.
10. In this case, notwithstanding the conflict with the SPD, I do not find the proposed roof design to be harmful to the character or appearance of the area. In other respects the development would accord with the provisions of UDP Policies BE5 and BE15. The extension would respect the limited symmetry of the existing building and would be in keeping with the existing building and the area generally in terms of scale, form, proportions, materials, design features, architectural style and building heights.
11. However, by reason of its relationship to the side boundary and adjacent property, my conclusion is that in addition to conflict with Policy BE22 and the SPD the first floor extension would conflict with the more general provisions of

Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (November 2012) and UDP2 Policies BE13 and BE19. These policies essentially require new development to improve and maintain the quality of the built environment and the character of the area and to harmonise with the existing street scene. In this respect the development would also conflict with one of the core planning principles in the National Planning Policy Framework that planning should always seek to secure high quality design.

Living conditions at 55 Dene Road

12. The first floor extension would cause some loss of daylight and outlook from the passageway at the side of 55 Dene Road and through windows in the side elevation of that property. However, the daylight and outlook are already significantly restricted by the high single storey parapet wall on the boundary and by the side of the adjacent two-storey house. Furthermore, the passageway is not a significant amenity space for a property with large front and rear gardens and the existing side elevation windows are obscure glazed and/or secondary windows to a room with a principal window that provides good levels of natural light and an open outlook. Any overlooking from the extension could also be prevented by a requirement for obscure glazing.
13. I therefore share the Council's view the first floor extension would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on living conditions at 55 Dene Road or in this respect conflict with UDP2 Policies BE20 or BE21.

Conclusion

14. Although the first floor extension would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on living conditions at 55 Dene Road it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. For that reason and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

M Brookes

INSPECTOR