



Appeal Decision

Site visit made 26 July 2022

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/22/3298909

53 Linden Avenue, Ruislip HA4 8TZ

- 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 Mrs K Green against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 42546/APP/2021/3950, dated 22 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is first floor side/part rear extension and front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area; and (ii) the effect of the proposal on pedestrian and highway safety having particular regard to parking.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Nearest to the appeal site, Linden Avenue is predominantly characterised by terraced dwellings which are arranged at reasonably regular intervals and on fairly consistent building lines along the street. Extensions including varied front and side extensions add some diversity to the form and appearance of the buildings and have altered the width of gaps between some terraces. Nevertheless, spacing at first floor level and above is for the most part retained allowing for views towards rear gardens and a degree of visual separation. Together with common design elements to the buildings including two-storey front bays, and similar fenestration and external materials, there is an overall impression of coherence to the street scene.
4. The proposed front porch extension would not be of significant depth, and would be set appreciably below the height of the first-floor level windows to the appeal dwelling. There would also be separation to the side of the two-storey bay which I consider would remain the most prominent feature to the front of the appeal building, and I find that the front extension would appear proportionate and sympathetic to the host property overall. Moreover, it would not be out of keeping with the assorted and in many cases fairly large front porches and extensions that I observed to other dwellings on Linden Avenue, and so would not appear incongruous or unduly prominent.

5. The side extension would not be set back from the adjacent front elevation of the appeal building, and would wrap around to its rear. However, it would be of modest width relative to the dwelling, and it would also be of significantly lower height. I find as a result that this element of the development would also appear generally subordinate, and I am satisfied that the overall bulk of the side and rear extension would not unacceptably dominate the host dwelling.
6. Be that as it may, the proposal would conflict with the requirement within Policy DMHD 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies 2020 ('LPP2') for two-storey side extensions to be set in a minimum of 1m from the side boundary. Given that it would also be aligned with the front of the dwelling in further conflict with the requirement in DMHD 1 for a set back, the extension would be prominent from the street where it would infill much of the existing space to the side of the dwelling at first-floor level and significantly restrict views through to the rear of the site. The neighbour at 51 Linden Avenue already has a two-storey side extension. This is of slightly reduced width at first-floor level, but even so and despite the presence of the alleyway that would be maintained between these dwellings, I find that the close proximity of the development to this neighbour would result in an uncomfortably tight relationship that would stand out against the more generous spacing that is typically maintained between the upper storeys of buildings along the street. For these reasons, I consider that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to other examples of two-storey side extensions on Linden Avenue, and errors that they consider have been made in the planning history section of the Council's report on the proposal. However, I saw that the lack of a neighbour to the side of 1 Linden Avenue and the differing orientations of 4 and 16 Linden Avenue to their adjacent neighbours provides for generous spacing to the sides of these buildings. I also saw that the side of 111 Linden Avenue is set in from the adjacent part of its boundary, and a public footpath leading to a bridge over the railway crossing provides additional separation to its neighbour at 113.
8. 73 Linden Avenue extends up to its side boundary, but the front part of this extension is only single-storey which reduces the visual impact of the development in the street scene, and 71 Linden Avenue is set in significantly from the boundary with the other side of the alleyway. Similarly, while 76 and 93 Linden Avenue are built up to the alleyways to their side, their neighbours at 74 and 91 are set away from the boundary, and although there is no alleyway between 82 and 84 Linden Avenue, the first-floor part of No 84 is set in appreciably from the boundary. Accordingly, all of these examples maintain greater spacing between buildings at first floor level than would occur on the appeal site. Their circumstances are not therefore directly comparable to the development before me, and I do not find that they offer compelling support for the appeal proposal.
9. I acknowledge that both 11 and 13 Linden Avenue extend up to an intervening alleyway at two-storey height. However, while the appellant's evidence indicates that planning permission for the two-storey side extension to No 13 was granted in 2021, the appended copy of the Council's report on the application refers to the two-storey side extension being set in from the side boundary by 1m for the whole height of the building. This does not reflect the development that I observed at my visit, and I am accordingly unclear as to

the full circumstances which led to the relationship between Nos 11 and 13. In any event, the limited separation that I saw between these dwellings at two-storey level is the exception rather than the rule within the street, and is not so significant as to change the overall character of the area. It further reinforces my view that such a close proximity of development changes the relationship between buildings along the street to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.

10. For these reasons, the existence of other side extensions in the locality does not justify the harm I have identified and the conflict with provisions of the development plan. I have determined the appeal before me on its own merits, and I find that the two-storey side extension proposed would be a discordant and intrusive feature that would harmfully erode the characteristic pattern of separation between the upper storeys of dwellings on Linden Avenue.
11. Notwithstanding my findings in relation to the front extension and that I consider the side and rear extension would be generally subordinate to the host dwelling, I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would accordingly conflict with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies 2012, Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the LPP2 and Policy D4 of the London Plan 2021 ('LP'). Together and amongst other things, these policies broadly seek good design, development that harmonises with the local context taking into account factors including streetscape rhythm, and subordinate extensions that do not adversely affect the character, appearance or quality of the area.

Pedestrian and Highway Safety

12. There is currently parking for one vehicle to the front of the appeal dwelling. Despite the Council's suggestion to the contrary, the proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms to the appeal dwelling so as to affect the requirement for parking under the standards outlined in the LPP2.
13. The front porch would reduce the depth of the site frontage. The appellant comments that the retained frontage would have a depth of 4.9m which would be sufficient to accommodate a vehicle, but this is not clearly demonstrated on the submitted plans and would seem likely to result in vehicles parked very close to the entrance door which could obstruct access to the dwelling, or in vehicles overhanging the footway.
14. However, the appellant has indicated that they intend to remove the front boundary wall and resurface the site frontage to provide parking. Although I cannot be sure from the details before me that there would be sufficient space to accommodate 2 spaces of adequate dimensions, I am satisfied that at least one vehicle could be accommodated at an angle across the frontage in a similar arrangement to other dwellings that I saw nearby. This would retain the existing level of parking provision on the site, and I consider that further details could in this case be appropriately secured by condition were I otherwise minded to allow the appeal.
15. As a result, I consider that satisfactory provision for parking could be made within the site, and I conclude that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to highway or pedestrian safety. In this regard, I therefore find no conflict with Policies DMT 6 or DMHB 12 of the LPP2 or Policy T6 of the LP which

include requirements broadly for adequate off street parking and development that provides safe pedestrian movement and that does not adversely affect on street parking or congestion.

Conclusion

16. I have found that the proposal would not harm pedestrian or highway safety. However, there would be harm to the character and appearance of the area, and conflict with relevant policies of the development plan and I do not consider that these adverse effects of the proposal would be outweighed by the modest benefits of the development in offering additional accommodation.
17. I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR