
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2024

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/24/3341999

18 & 20 Wilmar Close, Hayes UB4 8ET

- 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 Suty Bharrich against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application is Ref. 67410/APP/2024/208.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey rear extension with the insertion of 2 No. side facing windows. Demolition of garages and erection of outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host properties and their surroundings, and (ii) the adequacy of the living conditions for future occupiers of the dwellings as regards outlook and light. I am aware from the appeal file that there are other matters of concern to local residents relating to the potential for the future use of the building. However, in coming to my decision I am required to deal with the development as put forward and focus on the two reasons for the Council's refusal of the development.

Reasons

3. Wilmar Close is a medium sized cul-de-sac with a strong character identity due to all the houses being of the same basic design, typical of the C20th inter-war period. They are mostly in the form of matching semi-detached pairs with hipped roofs and elevations of brickwork and render, in some instances with the render confined to the bays and in others extending to the upper parts of the whole building. Where they remain, the curved front porches with a recessed front door are in my view a particularly attractive period detail.
 4. On the first issue, the proposed two-storey extensions are to the rear: of full width at ground floor level and set in from the flanks and the rear wall on the first floor. The Council considers that with the large scale of the proposed extensions, the resulting bulk and mass would be such as to dominate the original design of the pair rather than be subordinate to it. This would be contrary to its policies, in particular Local Plan Policy DMHD1: 'Alterations and Extensions to Residential Dwellings'.
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5. I acknowledge that the extensions would have their own symmetry and that through this balance of design there would be some 'in principle' consistency with that of the original dwellings. Furthermore, the proposed external materials would match those of the existing buildings and by being to the rear the extensions be not be visible in most viewpoints from the street scene.
6. However, despite these favourable factors, I give significant weight to the Council's assessment that the visual impact of these matching two-storey extensions would be too radical. The full width ground floor of a 6m depth and its flat roof wraparound of the walls of the first floor additions would be an incongruous feature at odds with the simple form of the original dwellings, particularly because as a physically linked addition to two dwellings it would be perceived as being of a considerable size.
7. As I have indicated, the absence of views from the street scene is a consideration in favour of an approval. Nonetheless, in this case not being seen from the public realm would fail to outweigh the intrinsic harm caused to the original built form of a semi-detached pair that, unlike many other houses in the Close, almost entirely retains all of the original features and character.
8. Furthermore, at the rear of the buildings there is a particularly open aspect, not only to neighbouring houses in Wilmar Close but also to houses on the western side of Hayes End Road. In large measure these are houses of the same design and period as in Wilmar Close and include some noticeably unsympathetic rearward first floor and roof extensions. My concern is that if the appeal were to be allowed, the extensions would be easily seen from the gardens and first floor windows of surrounding properties and perceived as making another negative rather than positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality.
9. Turning to the second issue, the proposed bedroom 2 in each dwelling is considered by the Council to have inadequate outlook and natural light. The Officer's Report explains that a side window in each bedroom 2 is now proposed to overcome the similar inadequacies of the rooflights proposed in previously refused application ref. 78150/APP/2023/2276.
10. However, it is clear from both the submitted plans and my site inspection that these windows would need to be obscure glazed and non-opening up to 1.7m above internal floor levels to prevent the overlooking of the more private areas of Nos. 19 and 16 Wilmar Close. And in so doing, this would preclude the outlook from the bedrooms and restrict natural light to them, resulting in unacceptable living conditions for the occupiers. I acknowledge that the relatively large size of the windows would be helpful in terms of light, but conversely this would be harmful as regards the increased potential for overlooking and a resulting need for obscure glazing to safeguard neighbours' privacy.
11. Overall and taking issues (i) and (ii) together, I find that the appeal scheme would have an unacceptably adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host properties and their surroundings and provide unsatisfactory living conditions for future occupiers as regards outlook and light. As a result, the proposal would be in harmful conflict with the Council's policies.
12. These policies are Policy BE 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies 2012; Policies DMHB 11, 12 & 16 and Policy DHMD 1 of the Hillingdon

Local Plan: Part Two – Development Management Policies 2020, and Policy D6 of the London Plan 2021. In addition, the proposal would be contrary to Government policy in Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023, especially the requirements of paragraph 135.

13. For these reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal fails.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR