



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 28 May 2008

Site visit made on 28 May 2008

by **Susan Holland** MA DipTP MRTPI

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

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Decision date:
19 June 2008

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/A/07/2050065

11 Armitage Road, London NW11 8QT

- 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 & Mrs Stern against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
- The application Ref C12586E/06, dated 8 December 2006, was refused by notice dated 16 January 2007.
- The development proposed is the replacement of the existing roof with new roof and rear dormer windows and the extension of rear 1st floor bedrooms.

Application for costs

1. At the Hearing an application for costs was made by the Council of the London Borough of Barnet against Mr & Mrs Stern. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Decision

2. I allow the appeal, and grant planning permission for the replacement of the existing roof with new roof and rear dormer windows and the extension of rear 1st floor bedrooms at 11 Armitage Road, London NW11 8QT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref C12586E/06, dated 8 December 2006, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposed development, firstly upon the intrinsic design of the appeal dwelling and, secondly, upon the street scene.

Reasons

4. On the first issue, the appeal dwelling is a detached house, of 2 storeys with rooms added in the hipped main roof. These are lit by roof-lights. Features of the original design include 2-storey hipped-roofed projecting elements (one to the front and the other to the rear), flat-roofed dormers in the rear elevation, and an angle of hip of approximately 45° throughout. The symmetry of the original cat-slide roof, into which the dormers are set on either side of the central projecting element, has been disrupted by a flat-roofed rear extension

across two-thirds of the rear elevation. At the front of the house, the projecting element is set to one side so that the outer face of its hipped roof continues in the same plane as the outer face of the main hip, and its side elevation is continuous with the main side elevation.

5. The appeal proposal is to replace the main hipped roof with a 'crown' or mansard roof, also apparently hipped but at a steeper angle of 55°, the faces mounting to a central flat area rather than, at present, to a central ridge. At the rear of the house the central projecting hipped element at 1st-floor level, together with the remnants of the catslide roof, would be eliminated and replaced by a plain 1st-floor elevation rising to the new roof into which 2 flat-roofed dormers would be set.
6. Whilst the new roof would be more massive than the existing, it would not be disproportionate to the bulk of the main house. The flat central area of roof would not be readily apparent from any viewpoint. The proposal would not alter the angle of hip in the existing front projecting element, and so would introduce a disparity in angle which did not exist before. However, the difference in angle would not be readily perceived, as there are very few points from which the 2 angles can be seen in conjunction and compared. On approach along Armitage Road, the constantly changing perspective alters the relative angles of main and subsidiary hipped roofs which are visible to the passer-by. The proposal would also introduce a plane of roof against which the hipped forward projection would be seen. This would provide a solid background to the oblique view of the projecting element and would bring it into a better-proportioned relationship with the main house.
7. The proposal would remove some original features of the rear elevation. However, the existing discontinuity and awkwardness between the flat-roofed extension and the main elevation would be much reduced by the elimination of the central hipped projection at 1st-floor level, together with the existing dormers. The new rear elevation, though bulkier, would be better balanced, and the new roof with its symmetrically-placed dormers would be in proportion to the new rear elevation below it. In these circumstances I conclude that the appeal proposal would not have a materially harmful effect upon the intrinsic design of the original dwelling.
8. On the second issue, Armitage Road contains detached and semi-detached houses. These are set closely together on plots of fairly uniform width, except that a group of plots at the north-eastern end, around the junction with The Ridgeway, are somewhat wider than average. The appeal site is one such wider plot. All the houses display similar, original features which are defining characteristics, including hipped roofs and forward projecting elements. There is considerable variety, however, in the detail of these features - such as the length of the main roof ridge, and the relative bulk represented by the forward projection. Though all such projections are prominent, their prominence is especially marked where they occur in a central position in the façade, and in the semi-detached houses where they are set close together. Examples of both these types are evident in the immediate surroundings of the appeal site at No.11, both opposite and to the south-west of the site. Subsequent additions to the front and sides of the adjacent houses have resulted in a wide variety of front elevation and in a complex street scene in which there are

similar themes but no outright uniformity. The street has not received any designation of special character.

9. As one of the larger houses in the street, on one of the wider plots, with a longer original roof ridge and with a forward projection set to one side rather than centrally-placed (and set somewhat further back than some from the edge of the footway) the appeal dwelling is not entirely typical of the street. Its immediate neighbour at No.13 has itself undergone alteration to a 'crown' roof, but this is by no means immediately obvious in the view from the street. Moreover, at No.13 the difference in angle between the main roof and that of the forward projection is barely perceptible, and the projecting element forms a distraction from the bulk of the main roof. The frontage of the appeal site itself is bare and open. However, frontage trees on other plots nearby interrupt the view on approach from either direction, with the result that the new roof would be seen most fully from only a limited length of the street directly in front of it. The effect of the new roof in providing a backdrop for the forward projection, and so reducing both its separation from the main dwelling, and its apparent bulk, would offer a positive contribution to the street scene. I therefore conclude that the appeal proposal would not have a materially harmful effect upon the street scene.
10. Accordingly, on balance, and provided that a condition to require matching materials were imposed in the interests of visual amenity, I consider that the proposal would sufficiently *harmonise with existing and neighbouring properties [and] maintain the appearance of the street scene* to meet the requirements of statutory Policy H27 of the Barnet Unitary Development Plan for *extensions to residential property*. I also consider that it would comply with Policy D2 in that it would *understand ... local characteristics, preserve ... local character, and respect the appearance, scale, bulk, height and pattern of surrounding buildings*. On this particular site, the proposed roof form would not conflict with the principles of good design set out in the Council's *Design Guidance Note No.5 Extensions to Houses in terms of Amenity; Harmony; Materials and Details; [and] Fitting Into the Street*.
11. I am aware that the subsequent scheme for which planning permission was approved by the Council (under Ref.C12586F/074 on 13 September 2007) includes a 'crown' roof, though at a somewhat lesser angle, apparent roof ridge, and bulk. The Appellants would prefer to implement the appeal scheme in order to provide larger living accommodation for their family. However, my decision is based upon the planning merits of the current proposal.

Susan Holland

INSPECTOR

