
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October, 2016

by S. J. Buckingham, BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

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

Decision date: 22nd November, 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/16/3158202

13 High Elms, Chigwell, Essex, IG7 6NF

- 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. Koak against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/1239/16, dated 5 May, 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 July, 2016.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension, flat roof converted to pitched roof and loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Nos. 13 to 15 High Elms are approached through a moderately ornate gateway in an historic boundary wall. With the two large houses beyond, adjoining Forest House Fields, they comprise a development of modern houses employing traditional materials and design details which complement their location in the grounds of a historic house. In their well-spaced layout and more elaborate design, including corniced and pillared porches, they offer a contrast to the more conventional terraced townhouses sitting outside the wall and are a considered and coherent group.
 4. Nos. 13 and 14 are a handed pair, and benefit from the strong design rhythm along the group as a whole, created by the consistent run of fenestration and repetition of ornamental details such as the curved parapet walls and decorative urns which flank the top parapet wall and sit over the arched gateways between properties. They have integral garages, set just behind the line of the front elevation. Number 15 includes these details.
 5. The consistent rhythm of design across the group is interrupted by an existing, flat roofed flank extension to number 13 containing an uncharacteristically sized and shaped window. It comes out to the width of the garage, but is, however is set back behind the curved parapet, allowing that detailing still to be read as a prominent element on the frontage.
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6. The appeal proposal would extend the side extension of no. 13 forward over an existing flat roofed area of the garage. While not extending forward of the main front façade it would be flush with the front elevation of the garage, and the submitted plans indicate that it would entail the removal of the curved parapet wall at that point. The proposal would also include the addition of a pitched and hipped roof extension meeting the original roof at ridge height, and facilitating the creation of new accommodation in a roof storey.
7. The proposed extension would therefore require the removal of one of the curved parapets, which are prominent features of the group and strengthen the coherence of their design. It would also be set sufficiently close to the decorative urn between properties, another prominent design feature, to diminish appreciation of its role in the consistent design of the group. It would therefore, by interrupting the coherence of a group of buildings which are intended to work as a designed whole, have a harmful effect on their character and appearance.
8. The appellant has suggested the use of a condition to recreate an expressed parapet feature. However the parapet walls are free-standing, and the recreation of one as an expressed feature is likely to look contrived and not to play the same role in supporting the coherence of the group. I do not therefore consider that the use of a condition of this type would serve to redress the harm I have identified.
9. The proposed extension would not extend any closer to the flank of no. 14, but would bring forward its front elevation thereby making it more prominent and intrusive in views of the building. This would be exacerbated by the presence of a new and relatively large area of roof. While no. 14 is not extended on its adjoining flank, and there would not be a terracing effect as such, the creation of a more prominent and bulky extension to no. 13 would diminish the appearance of spaciousness between the buildings which is part of their evident design intention. Although only obliquely visible from High Elms outside the gateway, the extension would be clearly visible from within. It would therefore have a harmfully intrusive effect on the character and appearance of that part of the area.
10. I conclude therefore that the appeal proposal would constitute an intervention which would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the distinctive group of buildings within which it sits and would therefore conflict with Policy DB10 of the Epping forest District Local Plan 1998 which requires residential extensions which complement and where appropriate enhance the appearance of the street scene and the building. It would for the same reasons fail to comply with the requirements of the Framework.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, and taking into account matters raised, I conclude therefore that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR