The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2016

by Graham M Garnham BA BPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 03 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/16/3163471
3B Forterie Gardens, Seven Kings, Ilford, IG3 9BY

- 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 Mohammed Rafique against the decision of London Borough of Redbridge Council.
- The application Ref 4438/16, dated 16 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2016.
- The development proposed is erection of side extension (re-submission).

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council has treated this proposal as if it is in the Bungalows Estate Conservation Area. Close inspection of the conservation area map shows that the boundary of the area runs through the appeal site, and that the proposed side extension would be erected outside the boundary. The Council has since confirmed that the boundary is shown correctly. I have considered the appeal accordingly.

3. This proposal is a re-submission following the refusal of planning permission by the local planning authority for an earlier scheme for a side extension. That scheme is the subject of a separate decision, ref APP/W5780/D/16/3160427.

Main Issues

4. I consider that these are the effects of the proposal on firstly, the character and appearance of the building and the area; and secondly, the living conditions of the occupiers of adjoining properties in Dawlish Drive with respect to loss of outlook.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a compact, double-fronted detached bungalow. It was built on an infill plot south of a pair of semi-detached bungalows at no.s 1 & 3 Forterie Gardens. There is an existing side element, towards the next door bungalow, used as a dining room. The proposed extension would be on the other side of the building, abutting the common boundary along the rear of no.s 205 & 207 Dawlish Drive.

First main issue – effect on character and appearance

6. The bungalow has a central front door with a larger and a smaller gable-topped bay feature to either side. In this respect, and with the lower original side element, the design appears consciously to reflect some of the distinctive design motifs that characterise many of the bungalows in the adjoining conservation area.

7. This proposal differs from the earlier scheme in that front wall would be stepped back from the line of the main front elevation, and the ridge would be lower than that of the main roof. These changes are a direct response to the reference to a "lack of set back" in the Council's reason for refusing the earlier scheme. I consider that these changes would be an improvement on the previous scheme. In addition, the setting back of the front wall of the extension would mean that the new ground floor window would not appear to be in an anomalous position, as I found with the earlier scheme.

8. However, in this case, the Council has advanced the argument that the ridge of the existing side element was shown on the originally approved plans as being 0.9 metres lower than the main ridge. The set down shown on the proposed front elevation submitted with this proposal is around 0.4 metres, for both the existing side element and the proposed extension. I have not seen the approved plans for the building but, by carefully counting rows of tiles, I am able to estimate the amount of set down of the side element. I find that it is much nearer the 0.9 metre figure given by the Council than the 0.4 metres shown on the drawings now submitted. As a result, I consider that these drawings do not give an accurate representation of the bungalow as built and consequently, of the proposed extension in relation to it.

9. The proposed extension would be set back a metre from the main front elevation of the bungalow; set down from the main roof by 0.4 metres; but have the eaves in line with it. This would contrast with the existing side element, which is: in line at the front; has a lowered eaves line; and has a ridge significantly lower than the main part of the building (and the proposed extension). I consider that the differences in these three respects would introduce a significant lack of coherence into the design of the building, create a visual tension between the two subsidiary side parts of it, and unbalance and detract from the overall appearance of the front elevation.

10. Looking south towards the edge of the conservation area, the forms and design of the property reflect the rhythm of the bay window features of the adjoining bungalows. The diversity of ridge heights would be obvious from in front of the property and could just be seen from within the Area, looking outwards. It would be less evident in views looking into the conservation area from the south, as a detached garage to the rear of no.205 Dawlish Drive shields views from this direction. The proposal would have no effect on the integrity of the conservation area itself, and no materially adverse effect on its setting. There is no need to satisfy conservation area design guidelines in supplementary planning guidance, as now sought by the Council as well as by some residents. Proximity of the extension to the side boundary may be an issue within the conservation area, but I consider that it would not result in an unduly cramped form of development outside it. Nonetheless, I consider that the short comings of the design would detract from the quality of the local street scene.

11. I conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the building and the area. This outcome would conflict with Policy SP3 in the Redbridge Core Strategy (2008) and Policy BD1 in the Redbridge Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document (2008). Among other things, these policies seek a high quality in the built environment, in which all forms of development are compatible with the distinctive character of the area and contribute to local architecture and design quality.

Second main issue – effect on living conditions

12. The insertion of the appeal site into the prevailing layout of the area means that the rear gardens of adjoining properties in Dawlish Drive are shorter than elsewhere along that road. Despite this, the separation between the main rear elevations of these houses and the proposed new side wall of the appeal property would conform with typical distances at corner plots in the adjoining conservation area. I am not aware of any separation distance standards the Council may have, but I consider that, in principle, the amount of separation would be reasonable and generally in keeping with the area.

13. In more detailed terms, no.205 Dawlish Drive (the corner house) has a first floor rear extension towards the appeal site. This abuts the back of the footway in Forterie Gardens. This means that the direct line of sight from the nearest rear upstairs window goes past the front elevation of no.3B and the other bungalows beyond it. At ground floor level, the detached garage abutting the appeal site would be the nearest building in outlook from within no.205. The highest point of the extension would abut the boundary of no.207. Even here, I consider that outlook would remain reasonable from both ground and upper floor windows. Bringing the side wall of no.3B just over 2 metres closer to the adjoining houses would be unlikely to have a significant effect on outlook from either of these properties.

14. The reduced height and depth of the side extension, compared with the earlier scheme, would have less of an impact on outlook from adjoining properties.

15. I conclude that the proposal would not detract materially from the living conditions of the occupiers of adjoining properties in Dawlish Drive with respect to loss of outlook. There would be no conflict with provisions in Policies SP3 & BD1 that require all new development to respect the amenity of adjoining properties and not to prejudice the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

Overall conclusion

16. While I have found in favour of the proposal with respect to the second main issue, I consider that this is outweighed by the significant harm I have identified with regard to the character and appearance of the building and the locality.

17. Thus overall and on balance planning permission should be withheld, and I dismiss the appeal.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR