

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2017

by Zoe Raygen Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/W/16/3159541

53 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London, E6 1AD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Richard Moore against the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref 16/01140/FUL, is dated 14 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as rear & out rig dormer with first floor extension to provide 2 additional flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused for the installation of new shop front to ground floor A1 retail shop and office to the rear. Internal alterations to existing first floor flat with external alterations including balcony at the front. Proposed new second floor and third floor roof extension with rear dormers with other associated external alterations to provide 2 additional flats 1 x 1 bed and 1 x 3 bed.

Procedural matters

2. I have used the description of development within my decision from the Council's decision notice and the appellant's appeal form. This more fully reflects the proposal than the description contained within the appellant's application form.
3. The Council's submission states that had it been in a position to determine the application it would have been refused planning permission for reasons relating to the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area and the effect on the vitality and viability of the area.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - i) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area
 - ii) The effect of the proposal on the vitality and viability of the Green Street District Centre
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Reasons

Character and appearance

5. 53 Plashet Grove forms a two storey end terrace property with a shop at ground floor and living accommodation above. It sits at the end of a terrace of similar properties. Although the fenestration at first floor within the terrace is varied, a single level of windows, together with a consistent eaves level provides uniformity across the buildings. The first floor windows at the appeal site together with their original drip mouldings contribute to that uniformity.
6. The side elevation of the property faces onto Walpole Road and contains three windows similar to the visible end elevation of the end terrace on the opposite side of the road.
7. The proposed alterations facilitate the introduction of an extra storey of development, within the property. As a result the front elevation would have two levels of windows within the existing first floor area. To achieve this the windows would breach the eaves line and be partly located behind the shop fascia. Not only therefore would the windows be a stark contrast to the existing pattern of fenestration but their proportions would also be at odds with the prevailing window design in the area.
8. In particular, the proposal includes the insertion of two uncharacteristically large windows to enable the provision of balconies which would be a further unique feature along the row of buildings. Consequently the alterations would create an obtrusive front elevation which would significantly erode the uniformity of the terrace. Moreover, the loss of the traditional bay window and drip mouldings and their replacement by ill proportioned modern windows would be harmful to the character of the building.
9. The proposal also involves the removal of two windows and a door in the side elevation which retain their original drip mouldings. They would be replaced with a large number of modern windows. As a result the elevation would have a busy, cluttered appearance, in contrast to its current simplicity, which I saw would not be representative of other end gable elevations in the area. Furthermore, the windows would be poorly proportioned having a squat appearance which would conflict with the linear nature of nearby windows.
10. The proposed dormer would be a large addition taking up most of the rear roof slope and extend over the rear two storey out rig. As a result it would not be subordinate to the roof but instead present a bulky, top heavy appearance to the rear elevation and significantly alter the traditional rear roof slope of the property. Moreover, it would give undue prominence to the building as it would be highly visible from surrounding public viewpoints. Together with the alterations to the end elevation this would result in a significantly visually discordant feature in the area.
11. For the reasons above I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies 7.1, 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (2016) (the London Plan), Policies S1, S6, SP1 and SP3 of Newham's Local Plan – the Core Strategy 2012 (the Core Strategy) and the National Planning Policy Framework. These require that development has a high quality

design response that reinforces or enhances the characteristics of neighbourhoods and local distinctiveness

Vitality and viability

12. The Council raise concerns regarding the proposed reduction of the floor to ceiling height in the unit from between 2.4-3 metres to 2.2 metres across the whole unit. They consider that this would conflict with Policy INF5 of the Core Strategy which seeks to secure the network of existing successful shopping centres. The Policy also identifies a need for the Green Street centre to maintain and develop its District Centre role, function and wider specialist ethnic retail draw through the growth and renewal of floor space.
13. I noted that the centre is dominated by specialist and independent retailers and that there are very few vacancies, despite the considerable size and extent of the centre. The centre appears to be in very good health and to benefit from strong levels of vitality and viability. I note the aims of the Core Strategy to increase the provision of larger units to attract modern mainstream retailers. Nonetheless, I have seen no evidence to suggest that the proposed alteration to the shop area would reduce the attractiveness of the shop for future occupiers. The floor area would remain the same. While the lowering of the ceiling height would lead to a reduction in the height of the shop window, the unit has the benefit of a frontage on the return elevation which adds to its attractiveness as a shop. Furthermore the amount of reduction is limited, particularly to the rear of the shop.
14. For the reasons above, based on the evidence in front of me I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to the vitality and viability of the Green Street District Centre. It would therefore be in accordance with Policy INF5 of the Core Strategy.

Other matters

15. Even if it was the case that the proposal had been the subject of positive pre application discussions with the Council, this does not outweigh the concerns that I have identified above regarding the harm the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area.

Conclusion

16. Even though I have found that the proposal would not be harmful to the vitality and viability of the area this would not be sufficient to outweigh the considerable harm I have found that the proposals would cause to the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR