The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2017

by G J Fort BA PGDip LLM MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/16/3157721
Land beside 33 Braintree Road, Dagenham RM10 7NA

- 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 Ms Hanife against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
- The application Ref 16/00751/FUL, dated 18 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2016.
- The development proposed is erection of a C3 dwelling house.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues in this appeal to be firstly, the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the streetscene; and secondly, whether the proposed development makes adequate arrangements for car parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises the side garden and a portion of land to the front of 33 Braintree Road. Located in a predominantly residential area, with properties of different scales, but all with generous setbacks from the road, the appeal site is at the side of one of a number of short two-storey terraces. These terraces are brick-faced with gable roofs. Although architectural detailing of the front facades is restrained their pattern of structural openings has a strong symmetry, emphasised by the gable springers at either end of the blocks. The plot sizes for the terraces are reasonably generous and there is a pleasant sense of spaciousness between residential buildings in the appeal site's surroundings. This openness is further emphasised by areas of informal public amenity space including that to the front of the appeal site and its adjacent terraced block, which add to the verdant character of the area.

4. The appeal scheme would secure the development of a two-storey house on the appeal site which would be attached to the flank wall of No 33 and include a hipped roof. The flank wall of the proposed development would be developed up to the boundary of the site.

5. Due to the proposed development's siting and site coverage, it would erode the visual gap between its host terrace and that of the adjacent dwellings to a considerable degree. As a result the proposed development would substantially diminish the open plotting of the area and thus cause harm to the character of its surroundings. Furthermore, the proposed plot size would be considerably tighter than that of its adjacent properties which would impart a cramped and shoehorned character to the appeal scheme, strongly at variance with the wider development grain.

6. The proposed development's incongruity in this regard would be exacerbated by its hipped roof which would impart an unbalanced appearance to its host terrace, undermining its strongly symmetrical character. The hipped roof would also be a visually jarring contrast to the gable roofs present in the immediately inter-visible terraced blocks. Consequently, the proposed development would read as an insensitive and discordant feature in the streetscene causing harm to its character and appearance. The use of matching materials would do little to soften the proposed development's harmful effects in these regards.

7. I note that the roof style has been chosen in order to minimize potential effects on the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent properties. However, this consideration does not weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development, when balanced against the considerable harm it would cause to the character and appearance of its surroundings. I am aware also that the proposed development is not within a conservation area, and nor is it a listed building, however, these considerations do not alter my view regarding the harm it would cause.

8. Whilst design judgements are to some degree subjective, I am mindful of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in this regard, which states that development should "respond to local character… and reflect the identity of local surroundings". For the reasons given above, the proposed development clearly would not meet this aspect of the Framework, and due to the considerable harm caused to the character and appearance of the streetscene would conflict with Policies BP8 and BP11 of Barking and Dagenham Boroughwide Development Policies Development Plan Document (the DPD) (adopted March 2011). Taken together, and amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that developments have regard to the local character of the area and help to create a sense of local identity, distinctiveness and place.

Parking

9. The proposed development would include no off-street parking. The appeal site is within an area with a relatively low Public Transport Accessibility Level rating, and consequently the occupants of the proposed development would be likely to be reliant to some degree on access to a private car. However, I saw during my morning site visit that a reasonable amount of on-street parking space was available close to the appeal site. Whilst I am aware that demand for parking may change over the course of the day, I consider that the limited additional residential space proposed would not exacerbate the demand for additional parking to any significant degree.

10. Consequently, I find that the proposed development would not cause significant harm to either highway safety or residential amenity in these regards, and thus

its arrangements for parking would be adequate. As a result, the proposed development would not conflict with Policies BR9 and BR10 of the DPD; or Policy 6.13 of *The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London: Consolidated with Alterations since 2011* (adopted March 2016). Taken together, and amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that new development avoids detrimental impacts to safety and street activity as a result of on-street parking.

Other Matters

11. The proposed development could help to meet the Borough's housing requirements. This would be a benefit of the appeal scheme, but due to the proposal's modest scale only carries limited weight in the overall planning balance. I note that the proposed amenity space could meet the day-to-day needs of its future occupants. However, this would not weigh in the proposed development's favour to any substantial degree.

12. I am aware that the size of No 33's garden is large and that the appellant considers it to be a burden. This may be the case; however, this is not a matter that weighs heavily in the proposed development's favour in planning terms.

13. The proposed development could avoid harmful effects to the residential amenity of the occupiers of adjacent properties. I am also aware of no reasons why residential development of the site would be resisted in principle. However, these matters are merely indicative of a lack of conflict with relevant planning policies in these regards, and consequently I attach only neutral weight to them.

14. Consequently, none of these other matters, individually or taken together demonstrably outweighs the considerable harm the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of the streetscene in the overall planning balance.

Conclusion

15. I have found that the proposed development's lack of off-street parking would not cause significant harm to highway safety or residential amenity. However, the lack of harm in that regard is demonstrably outweighed by the considerable harm that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of its surroundings.

16. In this latter respect the development proposal would conflict with the policies of the development plan insofar as they are relevant and have been drawn to my attention. Accordingly, as no material considerations indicate that a departure from the development plan would be justified in this instance, I conclude, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR