
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 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: 19th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/W/16/3157014
251-253 Romford Road, Forest Gate E7 9HJ

- 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 Ibrahim (Salstone Limited) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref 16/01697/FUL, dated 2 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of a mansard roof extension to provide additional accommodation to the existing house in multiple occupation use at each property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue in this appeal to be the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a pair of semi-detached dwellings converted for use as housing in multiple occupation (HMO). The building and its neighbouring semi-detached pair (Nos 255-257) are of markedly similar design, particularly in terms of their front elevations and roof treatment. Both buildings have two storeys over a lower ground floor, with symmetrical facades including bays in each property projecting from the lower ground floor to the first floor. Their roofs are of the inverse pitch 'butterfly' style, hidden from the front street behind a parapet. Roof and building types vary in the immediate surroundings of the appeal property, including dormers and mansard roofs. However, the similarity of the appeal property and Nos 255-257 adds coherence to the streetscene in a prominent and widely visible part of a route identified as a Key Movement and Linear Gateway in the Newham Core Strategy (adopted June 2012) (the Core Strategy).
 4. The proposed development seeks to provide additional accommodation within a new mansard roof across Nos 251-253. The mansard would have a prominent party wall at its mid-point. The front roof slope would include four windows, and there would be two windows in the rear
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5. Whilst I note the changes from a previous scheme for roof alterations at the appeal property, which was dismissed at appeal¹, the proposed development due to its scale and style would still upset the balance between the appeal building and Nos 255-257, and undermine the coherence and symmetry of this pair of buildings to the detriment of the character of the streetscene. I note that the windows proposed at the front would be symmetrically arranged in the context of the mansard roof itself. However, their placement would be out of kilter with the regularity of the structural openings in the appeal building's front façade, and would thus impart a discordant character to the proposed development. Consequently, the proposed development would be insensitive to its host building, and this would exacerbate its harmful effects to the character and appearance of its surroundings.
6. The harm that the proposed development would cause would not be mitigated to any significant degree by proposals to retain the parapet walls, and due to its scale, prominence, and detailing, neither would the mansard appear as a subservient addition to its host building, or be consistent with the scale of its neighbouring similar property. The use of matching materials in its construction would also do little to reduce the proposed development's insensitivity to the streetscene. I note the presence of mansard-style roofs in the wider surroundings, however, these are on differing styles and scales of property and thus do not offer a directly comparable context that would alter my conclusions in respect of the incongruity of the proposed development.
7. The proposed development would cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area. As a result, given the visibility of the appeal property within the Key Movement Route and Linear Gateway, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies SP1, SP3 and SP7 of the Core Strategy; Policy H17 of the Newham Unitary Development Plan (adopted June 2001); and Policies 7.1, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 of The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London-Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (Adopted March 2016). Taken together, and amongst other matters, these policies seek to ensure that development responds to local character and history and reflects the identity of its local surroundings.

Other Matters

8. The proposed development could increase the supply of residential space in the area of a quality to meet the relevant local HMO standards. This would be a benefit of the scheme, however, due to the limited amount of additional residential space achieved this benefit would only attract modest weight in the overall planning balance.
9. The proposed development would facilitate an increased use of previously developed land in a reasonably accessible area, and could improve the thermal performance of the existing building. The development could also lead to a limited amount of additional visual surveillance to the surroundings of the property by occupants of the appeal scheme. However, the appellant has not demonstrated that these considerations would result in a high level of sustainability for the purposes of paragraph 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), or that the design mitigates the proposed development's incompatibility with the townscape.

¹ APP/G5750/A/14/2226239

10. I am aware that the site is not in a conservation area and is not a listed building. The principle of residential use at the site is established. The proposed development could also avoid adverse impacts to the residential amenity of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings. However, these matters are merely evidence of an absence of harm in these regards, and not positive benefits of the scheme, and thus do not weigh heavily in its favour.
11. Thus all of these matters taken individually or cumulatively are demonstrably outweighed by the considerable environmental harm that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of its surroundings. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not comprise sustainable development for the purposes of the Framework.

Conclusion

12. I note that the appellant considers that the proposed development would comply with several development plan and national policies. However, insofar as the policies of the development plan relating to character and appearance are concerned and have been drawn to my attention, the proposed development would clearly conflict with these. No material considerations have been demonstrated to outweigh the proposed development's conflict with the development plan. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR