
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2017

by A J Mageean BA (Hons) BPI PhD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/16/3162241
13 Balfour Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 4HP

- 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 Mayfair Hotel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 1009/16, dated 10 September 2015, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is ground and first floor extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and local area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 11 Balfour Road, with particular reference to outlook and the provision of natural light.

Reasons

Background

3. The present proposal follows previous applications for alterations to this property, a number of which have also been considered at appeal¹. Whilst each case is considered on its own merits, I have had regard to these previous decisions in the determination of the present case.

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is within a row of two storey semi-detached Edwardian houses, with additional accommodation in the roof space. It has an original two storey rear outrigger, which is subordinate in both width and height to the main building. It also has a single storey flat roofed extension to the side which continues the side building line of the property. Other properties in this row have also been extended to the rear to varying degrees, though in most the original structures of the buildings are visible.

¹ 2127125; 2210527; 3153496.

5. I noted on my site visit that this area is of mixed residential and commercial character located close to the centre of Ilford. The appeal property is currently in use as a hotel.
6. The present proposal includes a single storey flat roofed extension with a depth of around 7m and which would extend across the full width of the property. It also includes a first floor addition above the existing single storey side extension which would have a mansard roof profile and which would adjoin the side building line. This first floor extension, and the existing two storey outrigger, would be extended beyond the existing rear building line of the property by, according to the appellant, around 1.3m.
7. I accept that a single storey rear extension similar to that proposed already has approval². I have no reason to take a different view with regards to this element of the scheme. However, of concern in this case is the cumulative nature of existing and proposed additions which would substantially increase the scale and bulk of the rear of this building. My view is that the proposed first floor side extension, including its small wrap around addition to the rear, would in combination with the permitted extensions, serve to dominate the character of this building in terms of both scale and mass to an excessive and unacceptable degree. In particular, the form and scale of the original outrigger would be masked by the width and depth of the mansard roof.
8. I accept that there would be limited visibility of these additions from Balfour Road itself, or from properties positioned to the south of the appeal building. However, they would be visible from the rear of No 15 Balfour Road to the north, and also in longer distance views from Heron Mews which runs to the west of the appeal site, and Heron Court. Whilst the appellant states that there are few openings on the side of No 15, there are a number of windows at ground and first floor levels which overlook the appeal site. I accept the point that the residents of this property have not objected to this scheme, though this does not in itself indicate a lack of harm in this regard.
9. I have noted the mixed character of the area which includes sizable extensions to adjoining properties. However, I have judged the current proposal on its own merits and found the cumulative nature of the additions proposed to be excessive. The appellant also points to the design requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), particularly paragraphs 59 and 60 which state the need to avoid unnecessary prescription. However, paragraph 60 also notes that it is *proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness* which, in terms of the character of this building and local area, the present proposal would fail to achieve.
10. On this matter I conclude that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host property and local area. For this reason it would conflict with the London Borough of Redbridge Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document 2008 (the Borough Wide DPD) Policy BD1 and Policy SP3 of the London Borough of Redbridge Core Strategy 2008 (the Core Strategy) which, amongst other things, require development to be compatible with and contribute to the character of the area, and to be of a high standard of design in terms of building style, massing, scale and density appropriate to the locality.

² Appeal ref 2210527 and planning application reference 3378/14.

Living conditions

11. No 11 Balfour Road is the other half of this semi-detached pair, and adjoins the appeal property to the south west. The Council has expressed concerns regarding the effect that the proposed extensions would have on the outlook and levels of light reaching this property. Accepting the fact that the rear single storey element of the scheme already has approval, the addition of a first floor element with a rear projection of around 1.3m would not in itself impact significantly on either rear views or the levels of light reaching No 11, particularly given that No 11 is located to the south west of this property. My view is therefore that the additional harm generated by the first floor extension would not be significant.
12. For this reason I conclude that the proposals would not have a detrimental effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 11 Balfour Road, with particular reference to outlook and the provision of natural light. It would therefore not conflict with the Borough Wide DPD Policy BD1, or the Core Strategy Policy CS3, both of which seek to protect the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

13. I note the appellant's comments that the hotel is HMO registered and is in addition used to accommodate referrals from the Council's housing department. Whilst it is stated that there is a shortage of such accommodation in the Borough, no evidence to support this claim is before me. Furthermore, the first floor element of the extension would only allow for the creation of one further bedroom and as such this contribution would not be significant.
14. The appellant also states that such development would be appropriate in this accessible town centre location, particularly as there are no highways or parking concerns, and as development in the Borough is tightly constrained by Green Belt. In this respect the appellant points to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the Framework. Such considerations do weigh in favour of this scheme, though to a small degree given the limited nature of the additional accommodation which would be created.

Conclusion

15. This proposal would have a damaging effect on the character and appearance of the host property and local area. Whilst I have also found that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property, and that this is an accessible location, these considerations would not outweigh the harm I have found against the first main issue. For these reasons the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole, and with the Framework.
16. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

AJ Mageean

INSPECTOR