

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2017

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DiP TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1st March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/16/3165677

6 Balgores Square, Gidea Park, Essex, RM2 6AU

- 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 K Roberts against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1264.16, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and part rear extensions, roof and front facade alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property forms one half of a semi-detached pair, with other semi-detached pairs either side. This short row is prominently-positioned looking out over Balgores Square and is located within the much more extensive Gidea Park Conservation Area ('CA'). The National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') defines conservation areas as designated heritage assets, and there is a statutory duty to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing their character or appearance.
4. The Council's Heritage Supplementary Planning Document 2011 sets out that the CA's unique character is due to the efforts of Sir Herbert Raphael in the early 20th century to create a Garden Suburb with a variety of houses by well-known architects of the day, complemented by a smaller number in a modern style during the inter-war period.
5. I observed on my visit that the dwellings within the CA are typically in a spacious, landscaped setting, often with significant gaps to their neighbours, set back from tree-lined roads, and with an individual design, but in an Arts and Crafts style. Although those characteristics and that style is more evident in parts of the CA to the north, this short row includes references to it. The buildings' articulation, architectural embellishment and elements of symmetrical

detailing create a pleasant street frontage. Consequently, although this row of properties have been significantly altered, they nevertheless make a positive contribution to the streetscene and to the character and appearance of the CA.

6. This proposal follows a previous scheme which was dismissed on appeal (Ref: APP/B5480/D/16/3143671) ('previous scheme'). It includes a two storey side extension, which would replace a flat-roofed double garage, and, unlike that garage, would be set in slightly from the boundary with no. 7. The shape of its roof and its facing materials would match those in the host dwelling. However, its front face would be a significant length relative to the host property, and it would significantly close the gap at first floor level to its neighbour. Viewed from the front, its first floor would not be recessed relative to the adjacent section of first floor. Those aspects of the scheme's design would give the resultant dwelling a rather elongated form, with limited articulation; and, although the roof would be set down, the scheme would not appear clearly subordinate to the host dwelling.
7. That impression would be exacerbated by the large front-facing window whose gable would break through the eaves line, and which would be disproportionately large compared to the windows in the floor beneath. The style of that window would therefore jar with the host and would result in the dwelling's fenestration having a very asymmetric appearance.
8. I observed that the other half of this semi-detached pair has a two storey side extension, which is not recessed, and that its hipped roof has been changed to a gable. However, as it is set back relative to its much taller neighbour to the south, that development has had a relatively limited impact on the streetscene. Its presence does not justify the harm that would be caused here. Nevertheless, that development does limit the extent to which this proposal would unbalance the pair.
9. The Council also expresses concerns regarding the proposed rear dormer. Although of smaller proportions than in the previous scheme, this dormer would still be of a considerable size, covering much of the length of the existing roof, and would have a very elongated, rectilinear form. Although I observed smaller nearby dormers in the CA, I agree with the previous Inspector that box dormers such as this are not a design characteristic of it.
10. The appellant states that the rear dormer would benefit from permitted development rights. However, I have dealt with the scheme before me as a whole, and the dormer adds to my concerns regarding the scheme's impact on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.
11. The appellant makes reference to an approved scheme at no. 9 Balgores Square (Ref: P0597.16). However, contrary to his assertion, drawing no. 1386/15/4 shows that its front face at first floor is significantly recessed relative to the adjoining section of building, thus resulting in greater articulation and subordination than here. Furthermore, it does not have a large first floor window with a gable breaking through the roof line, and it does not have a rear dormer. There are consequently material differences between that scheme and this.

12. For the above reasons the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property. As a result of that harm to this prominently-sited dwelling, the scheme would fail to preserve the CA's character and appearance.
13. It would therefore conflict with policies DC61 and DC68 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD 2008. Those policies set out in broad terms, that development should maintain the character and appearance of the area and respond to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development; and that, in the case of conservation areas, the character or appearance of the area shall be preserved or enhanced.
14. In accordance with paragraph 132 of the Framework I have given great weight to the conservation of this designated heritage asset. Although, applying paragraph 134, the harm caused to it would be less than substantial, the appellant has not made me aware of any public benefits arising from the proposal. Whilst I appreciate that the scheme would provide current and future occupiers of the property with additional accommodation, that would not constitute a significant public benefit such as to outweigh the harm that I have found.
15. I note that the appellant discussed his proposal with the Council and that it was significantly altered compared to the previous scheme. Nevertheless, having considered this scheme on its merits, I conclude that it would not accord with the development plan. Consequently, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR