

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2017

by C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/16/3162327

13 Meadway, Romford, RM2 5NU

- 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 Trevor Plumb against the decision of The Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0941.16, dated 23 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on, firstly, the character and appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area and, secondly, the living conditions of adjoining occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The Conservation Area is a very attractive residential suburb, characteristic of the Garden City and late Arts and Crafts movement. Individual houses are primarily of high quality and the quality of architecture, detailing, landscaping and spacing between buildings are all important to the special interest of the Area. The appeal property is an infill development, dating from the 1960s, but is an unobtrusive building that sits comfortably within the original houses seen along Meadway: the proportions, position, architecture, scale and use of materials are all appropriate to the setting of the house.
 4. The proposed works would see a two storey side extension, alterations to the existing garage, a new front timber gable and rendering of the house and extension. I share the concerns of the Council, which are also reflected by the Gidea Park and District Civic Society, that the width of this proposed extension would be harmful to the character of the area. It would extend to the boundary of the site, and so notably reduce the spaciousness currently seen around the building. This would have an adverse effect on an important element of the Conservation Area.
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5. I further share the concerns relating to the proposed rendering of the property. The existing brick finish to the house assists in ensuring this infill development is of suitably muted and unassuming appearance. There are other, original, houses in Meadway that are rendered, but I saw at my site visit these are generally in groups. Rendering of No. 13 as an individual property would draw more attention to the building as it would lie between two original, un-rendered houses. Together with the other proposed changes to the house, ie the side extension and the timber gable, this would appreciably change the appearance of the house and increase its prominence in the street scene, to become a far more dominant element. The consequence of that would be harmful to the character of the Area.
6. I note that planning permission was granted by the Council for a single and two storey side extension and part gable to the front elevation in 2007 (ref. P1168.07), which is a decision that post-dates designation of the Conservation Area. The current proposal is materially different to that previous refusal: the side extension would be wider, it is now proposed to render the entire property whereas the previous permission showed the extension to use matching brickwork, and the new gable was not annotated to be timber-clad. For the reasons given I have found those elements of the current scheme to be objectionable, and so I give little weight to the previous approval.
7. The proposed development would therefore harm the acknowledged character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Under s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 I have a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Area. The proposals would be contrary to Policies DC61 and DC68 of the London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (CSDCP) 2008, and the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2011, the general objective of which is to seek a high quality of design in new development that maintains, enhances or improves the local area, including conservation areas. Thus, harm would be caused to the heritage asset and I consider that to be substantial harm. I therefore give considerable importance and weight to such harm.

Living conditions

8. The proposed extension would bring the side elevation of No. 13 closer to windows on the side elevation of the adjoining house of No. 11. Those windows on the ground floor are a source of light and outlook for the kitchen of that house, whilst a window on the first floor serves as a source of light and outlook for a bedroom. The Council consider the proposed extension would have a harmful effect on these matters of light and outlook, whereas the appellant states there would be material harm.
9. Ensuring adequate levels of light to a neighbouring property's rooms is a legitimate consideration when appraising a proposed extension, as is ensuring that there is no overbearing effect on outlook. I have no objective evidence regarding existing levels of light to the neighbour, nor any effect the proposed works would have on light. Based on the submitted drawings, the written evidence I have, and from observations at the site visit, I share the concerns of the Council that the proximity and height of the proposed extension would lead

to a material reduction in light to the adjoining windows, and would be an unduly over-dominant extension as seen from that property. I make these findings notwithstanding the absence of any representations from the neighbour.

10. On the second main issue it is therefore concluded that the proposed development would be harmful to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers, and this would be contrary to Policy DC61 of the CSDCP and the SPD, which seeks to protect adjoining properties from the adverse effects of new development proposals.

Conclusions

11. I acknowledge the appellant's wish to provide additional space at the property, but I must balance that personal need against other matters of acknowledged importance, and I consider the harm to the heritage asset would not be outweighed by any public benefits. Hence, there would be conflict with paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The appeal is dismissed accordingly.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR