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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

**by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 23rd March 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/16/3164140**

**1 Grange Road, Romford RM3 7DU**

- 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 Rajeev Arora against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
  - The application Ref P1008.16, dated 15 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2016.
  - The development proposed is ground floor side and rear extension and basement extension.
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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 area.

## Reasons

### *Background*

3. The proposal before me follows the refusal of a similar application and the subsequent dismissal of a related appeal in 2016<sup>1</sup>. Whilst each case must be determined on its own merits I have had regard to this previous decision in the determination of this appeal.

### *Character and appearance*

4. The appeal site is formed by an end of terrace two storey property in a terrace of 4 similar commercial properties. It is located close to its side boundary with the playing fields and playground of Hildene Junior School. Grange Road slopes up from its junction with Straight Road and consequently the appeal property is very prominent in views across the school grounds and its blank side elevation is a particularly dominant feature within the streetscene. The gap between the rear elevation and the rear garden of No. 1 Archway, a two storey residential property also provides views of existing landscaping and a sense of spaciousness that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.

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<sup>1</sup> APP/B5480/W/16/3153360.

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5. Despite changes to reduce its depth and the use of matching materials, the proposal would project significantly beyond the rear elevation and infill the small gap to the side of the property. It would also be of a significant height, sitting just below the first floor of the building. This combination and because the appeal site slopes down to the rear, would result in an overly deep and unduly dominant expanse of built form and brickwork, with no visual relief that would be excessively disproportionate to the host property. It would also diminish the perception of space to the rear of the site to such a degree that it would harm the contribution that the gap currently makes to the character and appearance of the area. In its context it would not be a high quality of design.
6. For these reasons, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy DC61 of the London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2008 which seeks to maintain, enhance or improve local character and be of a high quality of design. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') and accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the design objectives of the Framework.

### **Other Matters**

7. I acknowledge that the appellant has invested in the premises and is seeking to invest further in order to extend the range of products and services available to local residents. I also note the appellant's claim that the proposal would ensure future economic viability and prevent closure of the premises.
8. However, there is little before me to demonstrate that there is a pressing local need for such products and services that are not already available to the community. Moreover, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence to demonstrate that the premises would be unviable without the proposal and I therefore afford very minimal weight to such a consideration. In my view, these matters do not outweigh or justify the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified. The fact that there may well be local commercial competition from other retailers does little to alter my view.
9. I note the appellant's reference to the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the Framework. However, the proposal would not accord with an up to date development plan and would fail to fulfil the environmental definition of sustainable development. As such, it would not be the sustainable development for which the Framework indicates a presumption in favour.

### **Conclusion**

10. For the reasons set out above the proposal would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole and the Framework. Material considerations do indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan and having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Richard Aston*

INSPECTOR