

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 April 2017

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/17/3169538

104 Links Avenue, Romford RM2 6NJ

- 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 A Pittathankal against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0955.16 was refused by notice dated 18 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first floor side extension and change of garage to habitable room.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey detached dwelling of individual design within a predominantly residential area. It faces Links Avenue, along which properties vary in style, size, orientation to the road and appearance, and lies within the Gidea Park Special Character Area (SCA). According to the Council's Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), the SCA derives its special character from the quality of its urban design, architectural detailing and locally important heritage associations.
 4. The proposal is to erect a first floor extension at the side of the appeal dwelling essentially by elongating the 2-storey built form and rooflines of the main house to replace the long roof slope mainly above the forward projecting garage. The new flank wall would be set back from the existing sidewall below and a new gable would be introduced to face the road. The twin garage doors would be replaced with a single door and chimneystacks would be demolished and removed to make way for the new addition.
 5. There would be no change to the footprint of the existing dwelling with the new built form in place. The external materials would match those of the host building and the new window openings would be in keeping with the fenestration of the existing dwelling. Sufficient space would also be retained between the completed dwelling and the adjacent property to one side of the
-

- site to ensure their visual separation. No change is also proposed to the highway, public open space or to thoroughfares, as the appellant points out.
6. Nevertheless, the new extension would be a sizeable addition. Its scale could not reasonably be described as subordinate to the host building, to which the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Residential Extensions and Alterations* (SPD) refers. It would also result in a significantly larger property with extended 2-storey front and rear elevations, an elongated ridgeline parallel to the road and a new gable that would be a significant and prominent feature when seen from the road.
 7. In views from Links Avenue, the new gable in particular would draw the eye, as it would be noticeably wider, taller and thus larger than its existing counterpart at the opposite end of the front façade. That the new gable would project above the ridgeline of the host building and stand forward of the main front wall and the existing gable would accentuate its visual impact. By introducing additional built form in this way, the proposal would relate poorly to the proportions of the host building and visually dominate the front façade to the extent that the form and style of the host building would be compromised. As such, the appeal scheme would be at odds with the Council's SPD, which states that the architectural style of the original house should be respected in any extension so that it appears to be part of the original house. The main outcomes are that the finished dwelling would be obtrusive in the local street scene and the quality of local urban design, which is a feature that underpins the character and qualities of the SCA, would be unacceptably diminished.
 8. I saw that existing built form along Links Avenue is varied and I have taken into account the properties to which the appellant has referred and provided photographs. Diversity of existing development is a strong feature of properties along Links Avenue. However, to reiterate, it is the uneasy relationship between the proposal and the host building that is objectionable in this instance. Having assessed the appeal scheme on its own merits, I find it to be an unsympathetic form of development for the reasons given.
 9. The Council's SPD states that extensions and alterations should not dominate or detract from the character of the original house. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also emphasises the importance of securing high quality design and for development to respond to local character and add to the overall qualities of an area. For the reasons given, the proposal would not adhere to these important principles.
 10. Against that background, I conclude on the main issue that the proposed development would cause significant harm the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, it conflicts with DPD Policies DC61 and DC69, which aim to ensure that development maintains, improves or enhances the character and appearance of the local area, particularly within the SCA.
 11. In reaching this conclusion, I have had regard to the appellant's personal statement. I note that the useable space within the existing bathroom is reduced due to the sloping roof and that some rooms within the dwelling are limited in size. The proposal would make an efficient use of the property and provide valuable additional living accommodation within the family home that

would improve the living conditions of the appellant and his family. However, these considerations do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

12. The Council raises no objection to the conversion of part of the area that is denoted garage on the plans to living space and to the installation of a new garage door. I, too, find these elements of the appeal scheme acceptable in their design and appearance. However, from my inspection of the plans, these parts of the development are not clearly severable from the proposed side extension, which is objectionable. Consequently, I am unable to issue a split decision that grants planning permission solely for them.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR