
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 April 2017

by Brendan Lyons BArch MA MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 24th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/17/3170997

16 Castlevue Gardens, Cranbrook, Ilford IG1 3QB

- 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 I Ahmed against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 4975/16, dated 6 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension at 16 Castlevue Gardens, Cranbrook, Ilford IG1 3QB, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 4975/16, dated 6 July 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location plan; Proposed Ground Floor Plan No.1/11 Rev.D; Existing and Proposed Elevations No.1/12 Rev.D.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans and the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), any window on the west elevation of the extension hereby permitted, facing No.18 Castlevue Gardens, shall at all times be obscure glazed and be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7m above the internal floor level.

Preliminary matter

2. The proposed development was incorrectly described on the planning application form as a conservatory extension. The appeal form follows the description used in the Council's decision notice as 'a single storey rear extension'. I have adopted this more accurate description in the heading above and in my decision.
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Main Issues

3. The main issue arising from the Council's reason for refusal is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the house and of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Castlevue Gardens is a suburban residential road, lined on both sides by closely-spaced short terraces of houses. The appeal property forms one end of a terrace of four houses. Its hipped roof has been converted to a gable as part of a loft conversion, which includes a wide dormer window facing the rear garden. The house has also been extended to the rear across its full width, in part by a two-storey element with a hipped roof, and in part by a single storey section, with a lean-to roof.
5. Permission is now sought to add a further single-storey extension, also with a hipped roof, which would join the base of the two-storey section, but would be slightly wider. The extension would have glazed folding doors opening to the rear garden and a large window in the side wall facing the boundary with the adjoining house, No.18.

Character and appearance

6. It appears that very many of the houses on this side of the road, which are all of consistent design, have been extended to the rear. The majority of these enlargements are single storey, and of similar depth to the extension at the appeal property, but other end houses, such as Nos.8 and 16, have also added a similar two-storey projection. In this established context, a further single-storey extension cannot be considered out of character in principle.
7. The stepped form of the existing extension already gives some irregularity to the rear aspect of the dwelling. The proposal would add to this, as it would not occupy the full width of the house and would not align with the width of the existing two-storey projection. However, the overall effect would not appear particularly incongruous.
8. The specific concerns raised by the Council relate to proximity to the boundary and cumulative depth. The extension would align with the side of the house, set in by about 1m from the boundary with No.18, which is equidistant from the boundary. To the other side it would be set away from the boundary with No.14 by more than 2.3m. These dimensions would provide adequate spacing to each side, without a cramped effect.
9. The proposed extension would add a further 3m to the existing 3.3m deep extension. However, given the established pattern of extensions along the row of houses to each side, the additional extension would not appear excessively deep. The houses benefit from generously sized rear gardens, so that the cumulative depth of extensions would not appear as an over-development of the plot. Because of relatively low boundary fences, it is possible to gain a fairly clear view along the rear of the houses, from which the proposal would protrude. But because of the established form, I agree with the appellant that the effect of this would be not unlike a modest new extension added to the rear of a previously unextended row.

10. In summary, I find that the proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the house and of the surrounding area. It would comply with the specific criteria for extensions set by Policy BD5 of the London Borough of Redbridge Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document, as well as with the broader design objectives of Policy BD1 of the same document, of Policy SP3 of the London Borough of Redbridge Core Strategy and of Policies 7.1, 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan.

Other matter

11. The Council raises no concern about the effect on living conditions of neighbouring residents. An initial objection by residents of No.18 about loss of sunlight and overlooking from any potential roof terrace was withdrawn following assessment of the plans. I agree that there would be no reason for concern on these grounds.
12. However, it was noted at the site visit that because of the raised floor level in the house the proposed large window facing the side boundary could allow views over the fence and into the kitchen window of No.18 and across its patio, with some loss of privacy for its residents. The main parties to the appeal were given the opportunity to make additional submissions on this point, in response to which the appellant suggested that the concern could be addressed by a planning condition requiring omission of the window or to secure its glazing with obscured glass. I agree that the latter, combined with a prohibition on opening below normal eye level, would be effective in preventing any harmful loss of privacy.
13. While no formal objection has been raised, I was invited to visit No.14, and noted that considerable use was made of the ground floor rear of the house owing to its resident's poor health. The proposed extension would slightly infringe on outlook from the rear window nearest No.16, and would be prominently seen from the patio. However, it would be set away sufficiently from the common boundary and its depth would be sufficiently limited to avoid any unduly oppressive effect on living conditions at No.14.

Conditions

14. The Council has requested that three other conditions be imposed, two of which are the standard conditions on commencement time and compliance with the approved plans, and the third to require materials to match the existing house. I agree that all three are reasonable and necessary.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, and having taken account of all representations made, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted subject to conditions.

Brendan Lyons

INSPECTOR