

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by Richard McCoy BSc MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 30 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/D/17/3171988
36 Stratton Drive, Barking IG11 9HJ

- 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 & Mrs Sultan Ahmed & Aneesa Hoque against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 16/01796/FUL, dated 14 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 10th January 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a second storey side extension and part double, part single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site contains a two storey end-of-terrace house on the western side of Stratton Drive, within the Leftley Estate. Proposed is the erection of a part first floor/part two storey side extension and a part single/part two storey rear extension.
 4. I note the Council considered that the proposal would not harmfully change the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings in respect of overlooking, overshadowing and loss of outlook, and from my assessment I have no reason to disagree. However, the Council raised concerns that the proposed side extension would partially close off an important gap that provides relief from the built up nature of the street thereby failing to maintain the character of the area to the detriment of the street-scene.
 5. I observed that there is a gap at 1st floor level of around 5 metres between nos. 36 and 38 which creates a visible break between the terraces, allowing a degree of openness into the street-scene and providing punctuation between the built form of the neighbouring terraces. The proposed side extension would be around 2.5 metres wide and would replace a single storey garage, extending the 1st floor and the hipped roof of the dwelling into the gap.
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6. The Council's adopted *Residential Extensions and Alterations* Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) advises that where gaps between buildings contribute positively to the character of the area it will be expected that the first floor side extensions are set off the boundary of the site. In my judgement, the proposed side extension would partially close the existing gap, detracting from the visual relief in the built form in a way that would be harmful to the spatial qualities of the street.
7. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policy BP11 of the adopted Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document which seeks to protect or enhance the character and amenity of the area, and the guidance in the SPD which advises that extensions should be designed so as to reflect the positive elements of the character of the area in which they are located.
8. While there are examples nearby of similar side extensions to that proposed, I observed that no. 36 and its neighbour beyond the gap at no.38 retain much of their original appearance to their front elevations. In my judgement, the addition of a side extension at no. 36 would close the break in development that defines the character of the estate as that of short terraces separated by small gaps. This would remove an attractive feature of the area, harming its character and appearance and would not be compensated for by gaps in the estate layout provided by intersecting roads.
9. Although neither party has invited me to consider a split decision, I note that the Council has not raised any objections in respect of the proposed rear extension. However, from the submitted details I am unable to be sure that the 2 parts of the proposal (the side and rear extensions) are clearly severable, both physically and functionally in terms of the rear part being capable of being built and then used for its intended purpose without the other part. For that reason I have not issued a split decision.

Conclusion

10. While I find that the proposal would not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, in my view this is outweighed by the harm the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the area. For the reasons given above, and noting the appellants' claim that the proposal would serve to meet the need for larger family dwellings in the Borough and their frustration with the Council's handling of the application, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard McCoy

INSPECTOR