
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2017

by G Rollings BA(Hons) MA(UD) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/17/3169510

Beech Oak Court, 156 Snakes Lane East, Woodford Green, IG8 7JD

- 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 Alan Pugh (Ambassador Group) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 3504/16, dated 21 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is a one bedroom penthouse extension to existing block of flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - The effect of the proposed development on the provision of external amenity space for its existing and future occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site accommodates a three-storey block of flats with a modern appearance. It is located at the intersection of Snakes Lane East and Ray Lodge Road, forming an 'L' shape alongside the two streets. A parapet wall surrounds a flat roof above the second floor, which is accessible via a common stairway and allocated as outdoor space for the use of occupiers.
 4. The proposed flat would replace an existing small structure on the roof space, which is used to house the stairwell. Above this would be a flat-roofed terrace, which would be accessible to residents. This would be located a storey above the existing roof space, and would be bordered by glass screens that would act as a balustrade around the edge of the terrace.
 5. The Council's objections do not relate specifically to the appearance of the enlarged structure atop the existing roof, but rather the glass screens. Despite their lightweight structure, their height and the length of the installation would significantly increase the overall height of the extension.
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Given that the building occupies a corner site which is visible in long views along the street approaches and also from surrounding properties, they would be particularly prominent.

6. Despite the mix of building types in the surrounding area, I did not notice similar development of this type on nearby buildings. I acknowledge the appellant's assertion that the structure would appear invisible in surrounding views, but I do not consider this to be the case, as glass can reflect light, collect dirt, and discolour over time. Although glass has been used as a feature elsewhere on the building and would reflect its contemporary appearance, in this instance its prominence would result in an uncharacteristic extension that would appear out of place within its surroundings. It would also increase the impression of the building's bulk, and appear as an ad-hoc extension.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the Council's adopted *Core Strategy* (2008) Strategic Policy 3 and *Borough Wide Primary Policies Development Plan Document* (2008) (BWPP) Policy BD1. Together, these policies require development to be designed to high standard which is appropriate to its locality, amongst other factors.

Provision of external space

8. The Council's BWPP Policy BD4 sets minimum standards for the provision of amenity space. In the case of the existing building, the Council has calculated a requirement of 360 m² in accordance with this policy. It considers the existing layout of the site to provide approximately 268 m² of amenity space, which is about 25% less than the standard requires. The additional flat would raise the Council's requirement to 400 m².
9. In dismissing a recent appeal proposal for a similar extension on the appeal building¹, albeit without the provision of accessible space above the extended structure, the Inspector noted that the site's location close to a town centre meant that its flats would be less likely to be occupied by families; thus, would have less immediate need for access to amenity space. I also consider this to be the case. However, the existing shortfall is significant. Although I acknowledge the appellant's comments that the building was originally approved with an insufficient amount of space and increased demand is likely to be small, this does not justify placing increased demand, however small, on the space. The division of the existing terrace is also likely to result in a slight reduction to the overall amount of usable space, due to the smaller comparable proportions of the new terrace, and accordingly I am not convinced by the appellant's assertion that this would translate to a better overall quality space provision.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the provision of external amenity space for its existing and future occupiers. It would conflict with BWPP Policy BD4, for the reasons that I have set out above, as well as Policy BD1 and Core Strategy Policy SP3.

¹ Appeal ref: APP/W5780/A/14/2213633; date of decision: 23 April 2014.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Rollings

INSPECTOR