
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2017

by N A Holdsworth MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/17/3170436
50 Greensted Road, Loughton, IG10 3DL

- 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 Hinson against the decision of Epping Forest District Council
 - The application Ref PL/EPF/3097/16, dated 21 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is proposed first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - whether the proposed extension and alterations would result in the creation of a substandard unit.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal building forms one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. With the exception of a small number of terraced houses, the vast majority of properties along Greensted Road have a similar form and appearance. Whilst in some cases the gap between the buildings has been infilled at ground floor level, in all the cases that I observed a gap of generally comparable width existed at first floor and roof level. This pattern of broadly symmetrical gaps helps define the setting of each individual building and their respective boundaries. When viewed from the street they provide a sense of relief from the continuous built form, offering a glimpse in to the gardens and sky beyond. Consequently, they are an important element of the suburban character of the surrounding area.
4. The appeal proposal involves extending the side of the building at first floor level within the footprint of the existing ground floor extension, beneath an enlarged hipped roof. Whilst the gap between the building and its neighbour would not be completely enclosed, it would nonetheless be infilled to the common boundary at first floor level. It would therefore diminish the established rhythm of the streetscape, leaving a residual gap that is

considerably narrower than those found between surrounding buildings. The resultant asymmetrical gap would diminish the setting of the neighbouring building, and would be inconsistent with the established pattern of spacing that is found in the surrounding area.

5. In consequence the proposal would conflict with saved policy DBE 10 and paragraph 15.67 of the Epping Forest District Council Local Plan (adopted January 1998) (LP) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that a visual break is maintained between properties to ensure that extended buildings complement the surrounding streetscene.

Substandard unit

6. The appeal building currently has a separate side entrance which can be accessed from the front driveway. The council express concern that the proposed development would create a separate unit within the extended part of the building, accessed through this existing door. However, the plans show the accommodation proposed would be contiguous with the existing house. No changes are proposed to the existing accommodation at ground floor level, and the upper floor bedroom would be accessed from the staircase within the main building.
7. The appellants state that the purpose of the existing door to the side of the building is to provide occasional access to the garden at the rear, given that the route through the main door is obstructed by doorways and the main staircase. This is consistent with what I observed on the site visit.
8. In conclusion, I find nothing in the description of development or on the submitted plans to indicate the extended part of the building would be used as a separate residential unit. Consequently there is no conflict with policies DBE1, DBE3, DBE8 or ST6 of the LP which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that new developments provide an acceptable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers.

Other matters

9. The appellant contends that the probability of the neighbouring building being extended in a similar way is low, and also draws attention to differences between the detailed design of the appeal building and its neighbour. However, these considerations have very little relevance to the main issue in this appeal, which principally relates to the loss of the existing gap between building and its boundary, and its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

10. Whilst I have found that the development would not result in the creation of a substandard unit, it would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR