



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2017

by A J Mageean BA (Hons) BPI PhD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/17/3175333

1-3 and rear of 5 Chigwell Road, South Woodford, London E18 1LR

- 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 Michael Croll against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 0733/17, dated 16 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is third floor addition to comprise 2 no studio flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to two terraced properties within a block of five units, referred to henceforth as 'the building'. It is located in a prominent position adjacent to the busy junction between Chigwell Road, South View Drive and George Lane. This area is of varied character, with traditional two storey housing alongside larger scale modern flatted developments. The building itself has commercial use at ground floor and residential above.
4. This is a three storey brick built building with a flat roof and front parapet. It has clearly been designed to create visual symmetry. Within the front elevation onto Chigwell Road the two end and middle units have flat brick frontages with simple string courses and banding details. The frontages of the two units on either side of the central unit are mostly rendered, with curved elements where they adjoin the units on either side. The render on these units is painted different colours, and a variety of window treatments are visible, though overall the integrity of the building design is retained.
5. As the building is positioned on a gradual slope and the units are stepped, rising towards the westernmost property adjacent to the junction, this slightly, but not significantly, unbalances the symmetry of the building design.

6. A previous appeal decision has allowed the construction of a studio flat as a third floor extension to the central unit¹. This had largely been completed at the time of my site visit. The current proposal would add two further third floor extensions on the units to the west of the existing extension, adjacent to the road junction.
7. As the existing extension is centrally placed and is set back from the front building line behind the parapet wall, it does not disrupt the symmetrical balance of the building, nor is it overly intrusive when viewed from the front. In contrast, as the currently proposed additions would be to one side of the building this would undermine the balance of this design, the awareness of which would be exacerbated by the rising gradient to the west, placing the westernmost unit, No 1, at a much higher level than the equivalent unit to the east. Whilst the set back of the extensions behind the parapet would reduce their visibility somewhat, this would not significantly diminish the harm to the overall integrity of the design composition of the building.
8. This visual disparity would be apparent at the road junction, where Nos 1 and 3 are clearly visible, particularly in approaches from George Lane and Chigwell Road to the west. The appellant suggests that the resulting prominence of the building at that point would be a positive gain for the street scene in an area of varied character. However, the angle of the building means that the most visible feature at this point would be the extended blank brick end wall, which contained an advertisement hoarding at the time of my site visit, and which has little to commend it in design terms. The prominence of this element would be exacerbated by the fact that at this point the extension would not be set back from the building line.
9. The appellant does not consider that the proposal would adversely affect the design composition of the building and also makes reference to the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that Councils should not be prescriptive on design matters. However, the Framework also promotes good design which responds to local character. In this respect I have found that the proposal would harm the integrity and symmetry of the host building, and would be visually disruptive in the local area.
10. I conclude that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area. As a result there would be conflict with the London Borough of Redbridge Core Strategy (2008) Policy SP3, and the London Borough of Redbridge Borough Wide Primary Policies (2008), Policy BD1 which together require development to be of a high standard of design in terms of style, massing and scale that is appropriate to the locality.

Other Matters

11. The appellant considers that the proposal would help address the needs of small households in the borough. He also argues that the Council's Pre-Submission Draft of their emerging local plan casts doubt on whether a five year supply of deliverable housing land can be demonstrated. However, I note that this document is currently under examination and therefore the current

¹ APP/W5780/A/13/2208039

position in relation to housing land supply is not confirmed. No further evidence on this point has been advanced by the parties.

12. Whilst I agree that the two studio flats proposed would make a small contribution to the supply of such accommodation in a sustainable location, the harm I have found in relation to character and appearance is in clear conflict with the corresponding development plan policies. Therefore, even if I were to conclude that there is a shortfall in the 5 year supply of housing in the borough and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date, the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
13. The appellant has also noted that the Officer Report in this case suggests that the Council may have initially been minded to grant planning permission in this case. However, the body of the report and decision notice clearly state the Council's reasons for refusing planning permission. In doing so full consideration of the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, has been given, and I accept that in this respect the proposal would not be harmful. I also accept that the neighbour's concerns regarding disturbance during construction could be controlled by condition. However, the harm in relation to design matters is decisive in this case.

Conclusion

14. For these reasons, and as material considerations do not indicate that I should conclude other than in accordance with the development plan taken as a whole, the appeal is dismissed.

A J Mageean

INSPECTOR