
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 August 2017

by Matthew Birkinshaw BA(Hons) Msc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U5930/W/17/3176020
92 Gosport Road, Walthamstow, E17 7LZ

- 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 Saving Energy Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Waltham Forest.
 - The application Ref 170132, dated 13 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 8 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is external wall insulation to the front and back elevations, 90mm EPS system to be applied to external walls and finished in a silicon render finish. Off white in colour.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The planning application was submitted by the Family Mosaic Housing Association. However, the Housing Association has authorised "Saving Energy Ltd" to pursue the appeal on their behalf. I have therefore referred to Saving Energy Ltd as the appellant in the header above.
3. The appeal is made against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the application of external wall insulation to the front and rear elevations. The same proposals have been submitted by the appellant at several other properties throughout the London Borough of Waltham Forest, which are also before me.¹ Despite the similarities I have determined each case on its own merits, and each appeal is subject to a separate decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene within Gosport Road.

Reasons

5. The appeal relates to a traditional 2-storey terrace house constructed from a London stock brick. It has decorative architectural detailing around the front door and bay window, with contrasting brickwork at first floor level above. Combined with the use of original materials these features are part of the traditional character and appearance of the host property.

¹ APP/U5930/W/17/3175295, APP/U5930/W/17/3175296, APP/U5930/W/17/3175297, APP/U5930/W/17/3175298, APP/U5930/W/17/3175302, APP/U5930/W/17/3175303, APP/U5930/W/17/3176030, APP/U5930/W/17/3176033

6. Several houses along Gosport Road have been unsympathetically altered by the addition of render, pebble-dash, porches and paintwork, including no.90. However, the row of three houses referred to by the appellant are situated further down the street on the opposite side of the road. Within the immediate vicinity of appeal site the majority of terraced houses have retained their original features and brickwork, including on either side of the host property. The traditional appearance along this part of Gosport Road makes a positive contribution to the streetscene and is part of the locally distinctive character of the area.
7. In contrast, by applying silicon render to the front elevation the original building fabric of the host property would be lost. Compared to other types of render or pebble-dash nearby it would also project forward from the front elevation by approximately 90mm. In a terraced row where the majority of adjoining houses share the same building line this would be a very noticeable addition, especially around the detailing above the front door and bay window. For these reasons I consider that the render would result in a stark, functional and unsympathetic addition to the host property. When viewed in the context of its traditional terraced surroundings the protruding wall insulation would be an incongruous form of development that would detract from the streetscene within this part of Gosport Road.
8. At appeal the appellant has suggested that a 'brick-slip' process could be used instead of render. It is claimed that the finish would look identical to a brick-built house. However, a range of only 6 colours have been provided, none of which appear to reflect the original brickwork of the host property. I am therefore persuaded that the materials would be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the existing house. Moreover, even if an accurate match could be found, this would not overcome the incongruous appearance of insulation protruding beyond the front elevation of the terrace.
9. Superimposed images of the appeal property illustrate that the detailing around the front door and on the bay window would not be concealed. However, due to the thickness of the render the architectural detailing around the front door would become recessed or flush with the front elevation. This would exacerbate its uncharacteristic appearance viewed in the context of a row of similar, traditional terraced houses.
10. Elsewhere the appellant has referred to the process of manufacturing replica architectural detailing so that the existing features would not become inset from the front elevation. But the only information provided is a generic manufacturer's brochure. No detailed drawings of the appeal property have been submitted, or examples to illustrate where this has been used successfully on similar houses elsewhere. Moreover, even if the architectural features could be replicated, they would still project forward from the matching detail on the adjoining property. This would emphasise the incongruous appearance of the scheme. Based on the limited evidence before me I am therefore not convinced that this technique would be suitable, or that it would mitigate the unsympathetic appearance of the external wall insulation in this location.

11. In reaching this view I also appreciate that the scheme would benefit existing and potential future occupants due to the increased thermal performance of the house. Nevertheless, in this particular case the environmental and economic benefits of the scheme do not justify allowing the appeal given the harm that has been identified.
12. I therefore conclude that by reason of its coverage and protrusion from the front elevation the proposal would fail to relate to the host property and would not respect the streetscene within Gosport Road. As a result, it conflicts with Policy DM4(a)(i) and (ii) of the *London Borough of Waltham Forest Development Management Policies Local Plan*. This requires extensions and alterations to residential buildings to relate to the original host building, respect the streetscene and the character of the area and where appropriate retain and restore existing traditional features and materials. The scheme also conflicts with Policy DM29 which is concerned with good design, and, Policy CS15 of the *Waltham Forest Local Plan Core Strategy* which expects new development proposals to give strong recognition to local distinctiveness. Of the policies referred to by the Council I consider these to be the most relevant.

Other Matters

13. Applying render to the rear elevation would not have the same effect on the original features of the property or the streetscene within Gosport Road. Nonetheless, the appellant has not indicated that they would wish to implement part of the scheme and only apply render to the rear elevation. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis, and as applied for.

Conclusion

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

Matthew Birkinshaw

INSPECTOR