
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip (Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 11 December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/D/17/3181425

5 Francis Close, London E14 3DE

- 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 Dr Louise Russell against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/17/01384, dated 17 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2017.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, 6m x 3m, bi-fold doors to rear with 2 x roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension, 6m x 3m, bi-fold doors to rear with 2 x roof lights at 5 Francis Close, London E14 3DE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PA/17/01384, dated 17 May 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos: 01, 02 and 03.
 - 3) Notwithstanding any description in the application, the walling materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match the brickwork used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. An extension has been constructed on the site. However when I visited I noted that this was materially different to that shown on the application drawings, in particular that the drawing shows a flat roof with slightly projecting eaves arrangement whereas that which is in situ has a roof with low parapets at either end. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the scheme shown on the proposed drawings.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the development would have on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The host property is a terraced house situated on the corner of a roughly trapezoid plan block of similar houses arranged around a courtyard. In common with many other properties in Francis Close the rear of the house, and intervening rear garden, presents itself to one of the surrounding roads. The surrounding streetscene is largely characterised by blocks, terraces and groups of dwellings of consistent appearance although there is considerable variety in character and design between the different blocks.
5. Although extensions are not evident around the perimeter of Francis Close, the simple, flat roof form would appear as a subservient addition to the host property and not appear out of proportion or scale with it. Its situation within a garden notably larger than most in Francis Close, combined with the angle to which the host property is set to Seyssel Street, means it is set back farther from that street than the majority of the adjoining properties on Francis Close. By reflecting this angle, the extension would not appear as an intrusive feature in the wider streetscene or unduly disrupt the uniform appearance of those rear elevations of Francis Close set in a straight line with one another. Its degree of elevation would mean that it would remain visible above the rear and side boundary walls from Seyssel Street and Saunders Ness Road, although not intrusively so even if the current screening around much of the garden were not to endure in the long term.
6. Having observed the effect of the similarly scaled in situ structure it evident that a render finish would make the extension appear conspicuously at odds with the host building and its neighbours which, although they have a rendered finish above first floor cill level, are characterised by dark brickwork below. However the appellant has indicated a willingness to use brick as a facing material and I consider that this could be required by way of a condition thereby avoiding any harm in this respect.
7. Subject to such a condition the extension would consequently not result in a harmfully intrusive element within the streetscene or in the context of Francis Close. It would therefore achieve the place sensitive good design which responds to local character required by London Plan, 2016 Policies 7.4 and 7.6, Core Strategy¹ Policy SP10 and Local Plan² Policy DM24. It would also avoid conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) anticipation of the rejection of poor design.

Conditions

8. It is necessary to specify the approved plans as this provides certainty and, as mentioned above, requiring facing brickwork to match the host building will preserve the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the area in accordance with the development plan and the Framework. The appeal is therefore allowed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

¹ Tower Hamlets Local Development Framework, Core Strategy - Development Plan Document, 2010.

² Tower Hamlets Local Plan, Managing Development Document - Development Plan Document, 2013.