

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2019

by David Fitzsimon MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/19/3227917

28 Meadway, Romford RM2 5NU

- 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 Beaumont against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1926.18, dated 20 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and that of the Gidea Park Conservation Area within which it sits.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a detached double fronted 'Arts and Crafts' style property which sits within the Gidea Park Conservation Area (CA). The CA is based on garden suburb principles and features a number of houses which were constructed as part of the 1911 House and Cottage Exhibition and a further exhibition of Modern Homes in 1934. The appeal dwelling is a two storey double fronted '1911 Exhibition House' designed by Cecil Hignett which appears to have retained its original plan form. The architectural quality of this house makes a noticeable and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
 4. The proposal seeks to add a two storey extension which would sit centrally on the rear elevation of the host dwelling. The proposed extension would have a lower ridge height than the main ridge, it would replicate some of the design features of the host dwelling and it would be finished in matching external materials. At 3 metres or so, its depth would be relatively modest and would accord with the advice contained within the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document titled '*Residential Extensions and Alterations*'. However, at its widest, the extension would be more than half the width of the host dwelling
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and would be wider than the depth of its main body. As a result, I consider that the overall scale and massing of the proposed extension would not respond well to the form and proportioning of the original dwelling and would dominate its rear elevation. In addition, in order to accommodate such a wide extension, the ground floor windows on the rear elevation which currently correspond with the positioning of the first floor windows above would have to be moved outwards. The effect would completely imbalance the rear fenestration, which only reinforces my concerns.

5. The extension would not be seen from the public domain. However, lack of visibility does not automatically equate to lack of harm and in any event, the extension would be visible from the gardens of neighbouring dwellings which also sit within the CA. On this basis, I consider that the extension would fail to preserve the overall character and appearance of the CA.
6. The harm would be 'less than substantial' as directed by the Planning Practice Guidance, but I attach considerable importance and weight to the statutory duty imposed by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework explains that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It goes on to say that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Other considerations, including public benefits

8. Like the Council, I am satisfied that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings given the separation distances involved, but this is a neutral factor in the planning balance. I also accept that the extension would deliver improved living accommodation, but this is an aspiration which, I expect, drives the majority of domestic extension proposals and therefore I attach only limited weight to this factor.
9. The appellant asserts that if the property was not extended this could '*render investment on upkeep/maintenance less likely/favourable*' which could lead to stagnation and harm to the sustainability of the CA. However, I am not convinced that the appellant would intentionally neglect and devalue the dwelling simply because planning permission was not forthcoming therefore I attach very limited weight to this factor in this instance.
10. The appellant argues that the extension would improve the levels of natural light entering the dwelling. This is disputed by the Council, but this factor does not outweigh the harm I have identified in any case. The appellant also suggests that the proposal amounts to the effective use of land and sustainable development, which would generate an economic benefit for the building industry. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) explains that good design is '*a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*'. The benefit to the construction industry would be small and

short lived. I have found that the proposal does not exhibit good design and I consider that it does not amount to the effective use of land because of the harm which would be caused. On this basis, it is not sustainable development in the widest sense of the definition provided by the Framework.

11. The appellant refers to other extensions which have been permitted at properties within Meadway and beyond, including one allowed by a colleague Inspector at No. 13 Risebridge Road (Ref. APP/B5480/D/16/3165210). I appreciate that some of the examples relate to large two storey rear extensions and I recognise the importance of consistency in decision making. However I do not know the precise details and planning circumstances relating to all of the developments highlighted. In any event, I have considered the appeal proposal on its individual merits taking into account the particular circumstances and context of the case.

Overall Conclusion

12. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and that of the CA within which it sits. In such terms, it conflicts with policies DC61 and DC68 of the adopted London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document along with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document titled '*Heritage*', which collectively promote good design that preserves heritage assets. The arguments advanced by the appellant do not outweigh this harm and policy conflict therefore the appeal does not succeed.

David Fitzsimon

INSPECTOR