



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2019

by D Child BA BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/18/3214484

4 Reed Pond Walk, Romford RM2 5PB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Park against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1103.18, dated 15 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2018.
 - The development proposed is described as double storey rear, part side and extending garage to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the appearance of the host dwelling and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Gidea Park Conservation Area (the CA); and
 - The effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbours.

Reasons

Conservation area

3. Reed Pond Walk is a U-shaped road enclosing an area of woodland within Gidea Park CA, which is an extension of Romford laid out on Garden Suburb principles. The appeal dwelling is situated on the southern part of the street and is a detached 'exhibition house' which retains much of its original character and form, and which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The revised National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (the Framework) advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 190 requires that the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a development proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) is identified and assessed. The significance of the CA lies, in part, in its historical evolution to the works of Sir Herbert Raphael to create a Garden Suburb in the early C20th, and in the variety of house designs by well-

known architects of the day, complemented by smaller development of a modern style during the inter-war period¹.

5. Although not a listed building, for the purposes of the Framework, the appeal dwelling is a non-designated heritage asset. The Framework requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset is taken into account and a balanced judgement reached, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
6. While not prescriptive or preventative of change within the CA, the Character Appraisal states that, "The roads built or partially developed for the 1911 competition and exhibition – Heath Drive, Parkway, Meadway, *Reed Pond Walk*, Heaton Grange Road and Risebridge Road – are the most architecturally distinguished in the Conservation Area" [my emphasis]. An Article 4 direction applies within the CA, but in any case, the proposal exceeds permitted development allowances. Historic England were consulted; their reply does not consider the merits, and simply confirms that there is no statutory requirement for them to be consulted on the appeal scheme. However, I note the objections of Essex County Council's Historic Buildings Consultant, and the Civic Society.
7. The proposed scheme would enlarge the existing garage to the front and add a first floor, flat-roofed, side infill extension. In my opinion, the garage would obscure window detail on the front elevation of the dwelling and become an overly assertive addition. The flat roof of the side infill extension would jar with the pitched roofs of the host dwelling in views from the street.
8. The gardens of adjoining dwellings are deep and boundary planting has matured to a significant height. Nevertheless, the upper parts of the rear and side elevations would still be visible from neighbouring dwellings and gardens. The increased depth of the extended dwelling would be evident from the street in oblique views in the gap between dwellings. In these views, by virtue of its design, massing, bulk and scale, and because it would not be inset from the principal side elevation, the rear extension would detract from the modest proportions of the original design and its well-balanced simplicity. The roof of the rear extension would have a pair of projecting hipped gables that would fail to follow the flared overhanging eaves of the existing slope of the roof.
9. The first-floor windows of the rear extension would closely mirror the existing windows and matching materials would be used. A substantial rear chimney would be retained. These are positive aspects of the scheme. Nevertheless, on balance, the proposed development would detract from the relatively modest plan form of the host dwelling and erode the architectural integrity of its original design. While I have considered the use of conditions, they could not overcome the identified harm.
10. For the reasons set out above, I find that the development would be unsympathetic to the host dwelling. This would be detrimental to the non-designated heritage asset, and the significance of the CA, resulting in less than substantial harm as set out in Paragraph 193 of the Framework. Paragraph 196 of the Framework requires that less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefit of a proposal. While I acknowledge the benefits to the Appellant that the improved accommodation would bring, the benefits arising from the development would be primarily private.

¹ Gidea Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals

11. As such, I conclude that the development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the design and heritage protection aims of Policies DC61 and DC68 of the London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, Development Plan Document 2008 (the Core Strategy), and the Framework.

Living conditions

12. The enlarged garage would have a single window facing inwards and would be located to the northwest of the host dwelling, which itself casts shade on the front garden. The side infill extension at first floor would face a blank gable of the neighbouring dwelling. These elements of the proposal would not therefore harm the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring dwellings.
13. The rear extension would extend outwards from the rear face of the host dwelling by 3.0 metres at first floor and 4.30 metres at ground floor. While it would exceed 4 metres at ground floor, it would be set in from the boundary with No 6 and its terrace, and the hipped roof would be set down and slope away from the boundary. High boundary planting exists between the properties and there would be no windows in the side elevation. Having regard to these factors, and because the neighbouring dwelling enjoys very long southeast facing gardens, the rear extension would not result in any harmful loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy, or harm the outlook of the occupants of No 6.
14. The rear extension would not be set in from the principal side elevation of the dwelling facing No 2, which has ground floor kitchen windows facing northeast towards the appeal site. However, these windows face a relatively high boundary hedge; although it has recently been reduced in height, this limits the amount of daylight to the kitchen. Although on this side the extension would not be set 2 metres in from the boundary, the appeal dwelling is separated from the common boundary by a walkway, as is No 2. The garden of No 2 is also long and southeast facing, and the roof of the proposed extension would be hipped and set down and slope away. There would be no windows in the side elevation. Due to the combination of these factors, I find that the proposed scheme would not harm the outlook or result in any significant loss of daylight, sunlight, or privacy for the occupants of No 2.
15. While an objector has expressed concern over use of the dwelling as a care home and increased activity and noise that might arise as a result of the proposal, that is not what the application is for.
16. Accordingly, I find that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring dwellings. Consequently, it would not conflict with the requirements of Policy DC61 to prevent unacceptable loss of daylight/sunlight, overlooking or loss of privacy to existing properties. It would not conflict with the aims of the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document to protect the living conditions of neighbours, or the Framework.

Other matters

17. The appellant suggests that the Council has not fully engaged with them to overcome their concerns, because no opportunity to negotiate was given. However, this is not a matter for this appeal.

18. It has been put to me that the proposed rear extension would screen a neighbouring extension in views from the appeal site. While that may be, it does not justify the identified harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
19. Other two-storey developments in the area have been brought to my attention as justification for the scheme. However, I do not have full details, and, in any event, each case must be considered on its individual merits.

Conclusion

20. While the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of neighbours, it would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Gidea Park Conservation Area. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Child

INSPECTOR