



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2019

by Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/D/19/3232205 302 Westrow Drive, Barking IG11 9BX

- 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 M Rahman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 18/02250/FUL, dated 21 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey end terrace dwelling on the eastern side of Westrow Drive. The surrounding area has a suburban residential character and properties are typically two-storey terraced dwellings from the interwar period. The dwellings are predominately laid out in terraced blocks of four properties with consistent spaces between the blocks. Consequently, the terraced blocks of houses appear well balanced when viewed from the street, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. It is proposed to erect a two-storey side extension at the property. The extension would have a width of about 2.3 metres and be constructed from materials to match the host building.
5. Westrow Drive is approximately 1.3 kilometres long and runs between Longbridge Road to the north and Upney Lane to the south west. Several residential streets intersect Westrow Drive, which breaks up the built form of the terraced blocks.
6. The appeal site is situated within a group of seven terraced blocks at the northern end of Westrow Drive, between Lovelace Gardens and Hepworth Gardens. Whilst several of the end terraced properties within this group have extended to the side at both single-storey and two-storey level, all of the

respective terraced blocks remain separated by gaps, which reinforces the local distinctiveness of the area.

7. The proposed extension would be built up to the side boundary with No 300 Westrow Drive. No 300 has already been extended to the side at two-storey level. The ground floor abuts the boundary with the appeal site, whilst the first floor is stepped in from the boundary, albeit to a very slight degree. As such, the proposal would effectively infill the existing gap between the appeal site and No 300. Whilst the forward position of the appeal site, when compared to the front elevation of No 300, would create a degree of relief from the continuous built form, this would be very limited. Nevertheless, regardless of the forward position of the appeal site, infilling the gap between the respective terraced blocks, would create a cramped form of development, which would not be in keeping with the spacing of the terraced blocks within the group of seven terraced blocks between Lovelace Gardens and Hepworth Gardens. Consequently, the proposal would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the area.
8. The appellant argues that permission has been granted by the Council on four separate occasions for the erection of two-storey side extensions to end terraced properties (No's 10, 98, 114 and 120-122 Westrow Drive), all of which would infill an existing gap between respective terraced blocks. The appellant argues that the permissions are material considerations because they relate to properties on Westrow Drive and were granted after the adoption of the Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document (2011) (the DPD) and the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (the SPD). Given that the properties are located a considerable distance away from the appeal site, they do not contribute directly to the local distinctiveness of the appeal site and therefore they are not directly comparable to the proposal. As such, I have afforded them limited weight in my assessment.
9. The appellant also argues that a number of other end terraced properties, which are closer to the appeal site, including several properties within the group of seven terraced blocks between Lovelace Gardens and Hepworth Gardens, have been extended with two-storey side extensions, which creates a greater tolerance for further alterations, of a similar nature, to other existing properties, such as the appeal site.
10. All of the side extensions relating to the properties within the group of seven terraced blocks between Lovelace Gardens and Hepworth Gardens retain a gap between the respective terraced blocks, which safeguards the character and appearance of the area. In terms of the other properties, the extensions to Nos 247 and 229 Westrow Drive retain a gap between the respective terraced blocks and therefore they are not directly comparable to the proposal.
11. The extensions to Nos 255 and 253 Westrow Drive infill the gap between the respective terraced blocks. Consequently, these extensions are the most comparable to the proposed development. The respective extensions amalgamate two terraced blocks, which I consider causes harm to the character and appearance of the area. The existing harmful impacts on the character and appearance of the area, does not provide justification to allow further harm, which results from the appeal proposal.

12. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal does not accord with Policies BP8 and BP11 of the DPD, which, amongst other things, requires new development, including extensions, to protect or enhance the character of the area.
13. In addition, the proposal does not accord with the advice relating to side extensions within the SPD which states '*Where it is considered that the gaps between buildings contribute positively to the character of the area it will be expected that the first floor of proposed side extensions are set off the side boundary of the site*'.

Other Matters

14. The appellant argues that due to the narrowness of the existing gap between the appeal site and No 302, it would not be practical to put forward an alternative scheme which steps in from the side boundary at the first floor level. However, no evidence has been put forward to substantiate this argument. In any event, even if I were to accept the appellant's position, it is not of significant magnitude to outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

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

Christopher Miell

INSPECTOR