



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2019

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U5930/D/19/3237646

81 St John's Road, Walthamstow E17 4JH

- 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 Mrs Fatima McRoberts against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Waltham Forest.
 - The application Ref 191701, dated 24 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a basement with light wells.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a basement with light wells at 81 St John's Road, Walthamstow E17 4JH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 191701, dated 24 May 2019, 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: Location and Block Plan Drawing No AL(00)00; Proposed Basement Floor Plan Drawing No AL(01)00; Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plans Drawing No AL(01)01; Existing and Proposed First Floor Plans Drawing No AL(01)02; Existing and Proposed Roof Floor Plans Drawing No AL(01)03; Existing and Proposed Front Elevations Drawing No AL(01)04; Existing and Proposed Rear Elevations Drawing No AL(01)05; Existing and Proposed Side Elevations Drawing No AL(01)06; Existing and Proposed Side Elevations (North) Drawing No AL(01)07; Existing and Proposed Sections AA Drawing No AL(01)08; and Existing and Proposed Sections BB Drawing No AL(01)09.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. St John's Road largely comprises a mix of semi-detached and terraced houses. Whilst predominantly being of a similar age, the materials and architectural

detailing on the houses, such as the shape and height of bay windows, vary. This adds variety to the street scene. Nevertheless, a consistent feature is that the houses have small front gardens and low boundary walls to the pavement. As a double fronted, shallow detached house on an irregular shaped plot, the appeal property is uncharacteristic of the road, but in having a small front garden and low boundary treatment, this does not make it unduly prominent, unlike the nearby three storey mid terraced houses.

4. It is proposed to create a basement at the property with a light well to both the front and rear. To the front the light well would contain 2 windows that would align with, and have a similar design to, the existing windows on the front of the house. The walls would be rendered to match that which currently exists below the ground floor windows. The rear light well would contain one window and would also be rendered. As such, the proposal would be sympathetic to the host property.
5. The rear light well would not be visible from the street and so would have no impact on the character and appearance of the area. Given the hedge above the front boundary wall, there would be little visibility of the front lightwell, with the only views possible being very short range ones for pedestrians on the adjacent pavement. Even if the hedge were to be removed, views would remain restricted by the boundary wall. As such, the light well would not be a prominent feature in the street scene. Whilst I did not observe other lightwells in the immediate area, its limited visibility would mean it would not erode the character and appearance of the area.
6. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, there would be no conflict with Policy CS15 of the Waltham Forest Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted March 2012) or Policies DM4 and DM29 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan (adopted October 2013) which requires developments to have a high standard of design that respects the host property, the street scene and the local context.
7. Whilst I note the Council's concern that this could set a precedent for other similar developments, given that I have concluded that the proposal would be acceptable, and bearing in mind that the host property is not typical of the buildings generally found on the road, I see no reason why it would lead to harmful developments in the area.
8. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be allowed.
9. In addition to the standard implementation condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant plans, as this provides certainty. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to control the external appearance of the proposal.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR