
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2019

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/19/3237135

61 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3PB

- 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 S Khodabaksh, Fledglings Nursery against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0440.19, dated 19 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a wooden framed store to the southern face of the property for storage of cycles, prams and other non motorised transport.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans, although I also note that the application form indicates that the development applied for was completed in November 2018 and I saw on my visit a wooden framed store to the front of 61 Eastern Road.
3. Comments submitted by a third party and the Council's report on the application refer to extensions carried out to the side of 61 Eastern Road. However, these are not part of the development before me, and my considerations below are confined to the proposed wooden framed store only.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. Eastern Road is characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached buildings. For the most part, these are residential although there are also some commercial or community uses, including at the appeal site which is in use as a day nursery. The buildings are arranged within a traditional layout and are set on a fairly strong building line facing the street which provides for a sense of uniformity despite the varied design details of individual buildings.
6. Space to the front of buildings generally comprises landscaping or areas for parking, and the boundaries to frontages are in many cases open, or are otherwise marked by relatively low level hedging, walls or fencing. There are some examples of buildings which extend up to their boundaries at ground

floor level or rear outbuildings visible in the gaps between buildings. However, given the fairly low level of these structures they do not significantly diminish the typically generous spacing between buildings. Together with the set back of buildings from Eastern Road and the limited enclosure of building frontages, this provides for an overall sense of spaciousness in the street scene.

7. The proposed store is positioned entirely forward of the front elevation of 61 Eastern Road, as well as neighbouring buildings given the relatively uniform building line along this part of the street. The store is subordinate in scale to the surrounding two-storey development, but is of greater height than the comparatively low level hedge and railings present to the boundaries at either side of the appeal site frontage.
8. Accordingly, while there remains some spacing between the front of the store and the boundary of the site with the footway, it is clearly visible and detracts from the characteristically spacious frontages of Eastern Road. Moreover, the forward projection of the store which is higher than the boundary treatment commonly found to the front of buildings on Eastern Road disrupts the established building line and rhythm of the street, and it appears highly prominent and discordant.
9. The appellant suggests that a condition could require colouring of the external surfaces of the store. Nevertheless, the feather-board timber and felt roof construction would remain at odds with the traditional materials of brick and render which are common in the street scene and the appearance of the store is reminiscent of a garden shed more commonly to be expected within gardens to the rear of properties. It is therefore an incongruous feature in the street scene which further exacerbates the prominence of the development.
10. I acknowledge that the proposal has not resulted in a loss of soft landscaping or distinction between the public and private realm, and I see no reason it impairs natural surveillance in the area. However, these factors do not mitigate the harm I have identified above.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal causes significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the development conflicts with Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2008. This policy advises that permission will only be granted where development maintains, enhances or improves the character and appearance of the area and includes, amongst other things, requirements that development responds to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development and that it complements or improves the amenity and character of the area. For similar reasons, the development conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks the creation of well-designed places.

Other Matters

12. The development is said to be proposed to meet regulations requiring 24-hour access to an external garden area, and the appellant indicates that 'the original area used to store the buggies was the only area available for that part of the nursery'. However, there is no detailed evidence before me of requirements which generate a need for the development or of regulations or other factors that affect how it may be provided. Furthermore, it is not clear from the information before me whether and how potential alternative solutions have been considered and/or discounted. I cannot therefore be certain that the

proposal is the only solution to address any requirements and this reduces the weight that I afford to this factor. As such, and on the basis of the evidence before me, I find that this is not a matter which would outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

13. I have taken into account comments made by third parties, including regarding the provision of storage for waste and loss of parking but these are not matters that alter my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR