
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2019

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/19/3236925

Grangewood, Bressey Grove, London E18 2HP

- 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 & Mrs Bhatia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 2047/19, dated 10 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the proposed replacement of the existing two storey dwelling with a new double storey dwelling house which will include further living accommodation within the roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Bressey Grove is characterised by featuring detached and semi-detached dwellings on spacious suburban plots. Other than the pair of bungalows that sit between the appeal site and the 4 storey block at the entrance to Bressey Grove, the majority of dwellings appear to be two storeys in height, with many featuring additional accommodation in the roofspace. Several nearby dwellings appear to have been extended or replaced and as such, although there are several common architectural features, there is substantial variation to the appearance of the dwellings within the locality.
4. The appeal site is one of the wider plots within the street and contains a dwelling that has a height which sits between the adjacent bungalow and 2 storey dwelling due to the gradually changing ground levels of the street. The primary element of the dwelling presents a gable to the street, with subordinate single and 2 storey projections to each side. Like several of the immediately surrounding dwellings, render and timber detailing are a feature of the appearance of the dwelling.
5. The proposal would see the erection of a replacement dwelling that would be 2 storey for its entire width, leaving a small gap to each side boundary. The dwelling would feature a single storey front projection and a pair of 2 storey projections of contrasting form and design. The roofspace would be utilised to

- provide a third floor of accommodation, with 2 box dormers to the rear elevation and rooflights to the front elevation and the flat roof.
6. The two storey extent of the dwelling would be wider than the other detached dwellings of the locality and cause the dwelling to have a bulky appearance that would not be aided by the deep return at each side. When viewed from the street, particularly from the part of Bressey Grove that is in front of the adjacent bungalows, the increase in the bulk and scale of the built form at the site would be apparent and cause the dwelling to be dominating of the street. In this regard, although the appellant has suggested that the proposed ridge would match the height of the neighbouring bungalow, the submitted plans show that the proposed dwelling would remain taller. The neighbouring dwelling would not, therefore, mask the side elevation of the dwelling, and as such the bulk of the dwelling would become an obvious feature of the street.
 7. Although gaps would be provided at each side of the dwelling, two storey built form would fill the majority of the site's width. In this case, the space to the side of the dwelling would not be sufficient to mitigate the increased effect of the dwelling and the sense that it would dominate the plot and the locality.
 8. Two storey front projections are a feature of many dwellings in the area, but no other dwellings or pairs of dwellings appear to have 2 projections of differing scale, roof design and fenestration in such close proximity to each other. Furthermore, whilst the existing dwelling has a variety of elements at the front and side, they are more cohesive in appearance than that which is proposed. In this case, whilst they would help to break up what would otherwise be an unrelenting roofscape, the 2 storey front projections would add to the bulk and mass of the dwelling, emphasise its depth and cause it to have an incongruous appearance that would not contribute positively to the appearance of the dwelling or the street.
 9. The proposed dormers would have a limited effect on the character and appearance of the area due to their positioning at the rear of the dwelling and well away from the edges of the roof. Dormers of comparable scale exist within the surrounding area and several are located on smaller roofs than that which is hereby proposed. As such, the dormers would not be at odds with the appearance of development within the locality. Whilst I do not share the concerns of the Council in this respect, this does not alter my assessment in relation to the other harm that has been identified.
 10. Similarly, whilst the materials proposed would be appropriate, the increase of the footprint of the dwelling would be relatively small, the height of the dwelling would be comparable to most other buildings and the dwelling would be further from the boundaries than the existing dwelling, these factors would not mitigate the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.
 11. The appellant's submissions include examples of other buildings within the local area that are of a comparable scale or feature architecture that deviates from the remainder of the locality. However, I have insufficient details of the planning history of those buildings to be able to afford their presence more than minimal weight. In any event, most of the other dwellings that have been identified as examples of comparable development sit within groups of other dwellings of similar scale and bulk and as such their effect is not so pronounced.

12. The appellants have highlighted that Sections 5 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies 3.3, 3.4 and 3.8 of the London Plan (2016) support the creation of new homes, encourage the provision of a mix of housing and promote the effective use of land. However, as the proposal relates to the replacement of an existing dwelling, there are minimal benefits arising from the proposal in this regard. Similarly, as there would not be an increase of the number of residential units, the location of the site in relation to services, facilities and transport connections would be a neutral factor in relation to this proposal.
13. Furthermore, not causing harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents, complying with standards in relation to garden space and parking provision and engaging in pre-application discussions with the Council are conventional requirements that do not outweigh the harm identified. In addition, while the proposal would utilise sustainable and energy efficient building techniques and provide accommodation that the appellant considers to be an enhancement, I do not find that these benefits would compensate the harm caused to the character and appearance of the area.
14. The appellants have identified that the proposal would help to accommodate their growing family. Whilst I have had regard to this, I am mindful of the advice contained in Planning Practice Guidance¹ that, in general, planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. It is also probable that the proposed development would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to be material. I therefore find that these considerations do not outweigh the harm that has been identified.
15. For the reasons given above, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. The development would, therefore, be contrary to Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030 which requires that development is of high architectural quality that respects the local character of the area, makes a positive architectural contribution to its context and is respectful of the surrounding area in terms of style, massing, scale and design. The proposal is also contrary to policy 7.4 of the London Plan which requires development to be of high design quality and have regard to the scale and mass of surrounding buildings. I also find that the proposal would be contrary to paragraph 127 of the Framework which requires that development is sympathetic to local character

Conclusion

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

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR

¹ Paragraph 008 Reference ID 21b-008-20140306 – 'What is a material planning consideration?'