



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2019

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/D/19/3237416

279 Westrow Drive, Barking IG11 9BU

- 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 Damian Henry against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 19/00748/FUL, dated 27 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and erection of two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The proposed development is described in the application form as two storey side extension converting of existing garage into habitable room. However, the garage is not proposed for retention and conversion. Therefore, in the interests of clarity I have adopted the description of the development from the decision notice and the appeal statement in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. No 279 is one of a pair of matching 2 storey semi-detached properties, with hipped roofs and a central front gable with bay windows at ground and first floor levels. It is in a prominent and open location on the corner of Westrow Drive and Cavendish Gardens. As a result of their siting and orientation, the pair are angled away and well separated from the properties to either side. The area is residential, characterised predominantly by closely-spaced short terraces with semi-detached properties on corner plots. The regular arrangement of similar properties with open frontages, mature planting and street trees results in a harmonious character and appearance to the area.
5. The proposal would be a substantial and bulky addition to the property. While it would optimise the use of the land to the side of No 279, the large and angular extension would be an uncharacteristic and discordant form of development. Notwithstanding the small set back and use of materials to match, it would overwhelm the host property and it would unbalance the pair of semi-detached properties.

6. The proposal would be built in close proximity to the boundary and the single storey extension to the side of No 277. Its frontage would be angled back to meet the building line of the front elevation of No 277 and a small gap would be retained between the properties. Nevertheless, the proposal would be a dominant feature that would not relate well to the neighbouring property and it would result in a loss of openness and a sense of enclosure. Consequently, by virtue of its large size and scale and awkward relationship with its neighbours, the proposal would be visually obtrusive and incongruous in the street scene. It would not contribute to local distinctiveness or place making.
7. Therefore, the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the development plan, including policies BP8 and BP11 of Planning for the future of Barking and Dagenham Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document Adopted March 2011. These require, among other things, that development protects or enhances the character of the area, contributing to the sense of local identity, distinctiveness and place. It would also conflict with the guidance in the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document Adopted February 2012.
8. I appreciate that properties elsewhere in the area have been extended. However, there appear to be key differences between those schemes and the appeal proposal including in terms of the size, design and location of extensions and the types of property and their relationship to neighbouring properties. On the basis of the evidence before me, neither extensions to terraced dwellings nor semi-detached properties elsewhere in the area appear directly comparable to the appeal scheme. Moreover, they do not provide a visual context for the scheme. They are not therefore a justification for the proposal, which must be considered on its own merits.

Other Matters

9. My attention has been drawn to policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), including those relating to the effective use of land. However, compliance with some policies in the Framework is not an additional benefit of the appeal scheme and does not outweigh the conflict with the development plan that I have identified.
10. The additional living accommodation would be a benefit to the appellant. However, there is little before me to demonstrate that the appeal property is not currently suitable to be occupied by a family or that similar benefits could not be delivered by an alternative proposal that would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. The parties engaged with one another at the pre-application stage. Although I accept that amendments were made to address the concerns of the Council, these were not sufficient to overcome the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

12. I have concluded that the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations that outweigh that conflict. For this reason, the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester INSPECTOR