



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2019

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/W/19/3237564

303 Queensbridge Road, Hackney, London E8 3LX

- 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 Antony Mackintosh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
 - The application Ref 2018/4575, dated 13 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is to erect a 2-bedroom 4-person flat on an existing flat roof with 1. no designated car parking 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 area.

Reasons

3. The site is located within a built-up area with a mix of building sizes and styles. To the rear is the substantial Queensbridge Primary School building and to the western side, fronting Middleton Road, there are buildings of a more modest scale. The main part of 303 Queensbridge Road is 4 stories in height, however, to the western side, and helping the building to step down and relate in scale to the adjoining line of buildings, is a 3 storey element set back from the front face of the main building.
4. When viewed from directly in front of the site from Middleton Road, the additional accommodation would be in a gable form with the ridge running into the main part of the roof. The retention of the existing parapet wall would help reduce the impact of this part of the extension in design terms in relation to the main section of the building. However, the additional bulk from the gable would contrast with the lower form and character of the adjoining properties along this side of Middleton Road and, in particular, the next property at 78 Middleton Road.
5. Furthermore, in angled views from within sections of Middleton Road, the end cheek of the flat roof rear extension would be apparent. Together with the gable this would create a bulky addition at roof level and would be at odds with the pitched roof form of the main part of the building. The result would be to

detract from the character and appearance of this section of the street scene and harm the visual relationship with the neighbouring properties.

6. The rear of the building is apparent from areas within the school site and in angled views from parts of Queensbridge Road. In these views, with the exception of the flat roofed top of the lift shaft, the hipped roof is an agreeable feature of the building with the flat roofed lower sections of the building appearing less prominent. The proposal would incorporate a reasonably sizeable flat roofed addition that would cut into and dominate the rear roof form. The height of the top of the flat roof would be close to the ridge of the main building and this flat roofed upper storey element of the proposal would appear as a discordant and incongruous addition that would not integrate successfully with the form and character of the pitched roof. As a consequence, the proposal would detract from the building as a whole.
7. For these reasons, the proposal would fail the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requirement that development should add to the overall quality of the area and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture. The Framework advises that decisions should support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential buildings for new homes. However, in this respect, the Framework approach would not be met because the proposal is not well-designed.
8. I have taken into account the taller buildings that have been brought to my attention, those in the immediate and the wider area, and also the variety of buildings and their heights which I noted at my site visit. However, in this case, the proposal would not successfully integrate with the existing building nor have a satisfactory relationship with the adjoining buildings in Middleton Road. I therefore attribute the fact that there may be taller and more bulky buildings, as well as other flat roofed additions, in the immediate and wider area limited weight in my considerations.
9. In the light of the above analysis, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the building, and in turn the area, and therefore it would conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (March 2016), Policy 24 of the Hackney Local Development Framework Core Strategy (November 2010) and Policy DM1 of the Hackney Development Management Local Plan (2015) which seek, amongst other things, to require all developments including alterations and extensions to be of high quality design.

Other Matters

10. The proposal would provide a small but worthwhile addition to the housing stock in a location with good access to local services, facilities and public transport. I note that the accommodation would be of a size to meet appropriate standards, be constructed from a timber frame and meet internal water usage rates. No objection is raised to the principle of an additional unit, the proposed materials or in respect of amenity issues. However, as only a single unit of accommodation would be provided, the benefits that would accrue from the proposal would be limited and would not outweigh the harm I have found to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above, and taking all other matters into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR