



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020

by M Heron BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/W/19/3240727

33 Amberley Road, Buckhurst Hill IG9 5QW

- 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 Michael Hill against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/1403/19, dated 29 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'the enlargement of the first floor front gable to the existing house at 33 Amberley Road and at the new dwelling approved under reference EPF/1426/17 (two storey one bedroom end terrace dwelling) in order to create an additional bedroom for both dwellings'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Planning permission has been granted¹ at the appeal site for a new dwelling which would adjoin the side of No 33. This appeared to be under construction at the time of my visit. I henceforth refer to this as the 'previous permission'.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No 33, the previous permission and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Amberley Road is a residential street characterised by a range of property types, many of which have front facing gable features. The topography of this street rises from east to west to meet Russel Road, which is set above the appeal site and abuts its north western boundary. No 33 and the previous permission are single storey properties sited at the end of a row of single storey dwellings which are close to the junction with Russel Road. These terraced properties each have a small, unobtrusive, front facing gable feature. Such features, together with the common height, give these dwellings a sense of rhythm and uniformity.
5. To provide additional first floor accommodation, this proposal seeks permission to enlarge the size of the existing front gable at No 33. It also seeks to increase the size of the front gable at the previous permission to match that at No 33.

¹ EPF/1426/17

The scheme would not result in harm to protected trees or alter the landscaping approved under the previous permission. Nevertheless, the new gable at No 33 would occupy a significant proportion of the roofscape of this property and the gable at the previous permission would cover the full width of this dwelling. Although no higher than the roof ridge height, both gables would also be notably taller than the gables they replace. In my view, the proposed gables would therefore appear as bulky additions to respective host properties that would visually dominate their principal elevations. This would harm their overall design.

6. In addition, the proposed gables would be markedly taller than the existing gable features at properties within the terrace of dwellings to which No 33 and the previous permission belong. The scheme would therefore disrupt the architectural rhythm of this terrace, to the detriment of the appearance of this part of the streetscene. This would reinforce the harm identified above.
7. I appreciate that the scheme would improve the internal living space within No 33 and the previous permission. However, taking the above into account, I find that the proposal would introduce inappropriate features to them that would fail to integrate effectively with their design and the rhythm of surrounding development. With regard to the topography of the immediate area, the scheme's harmful impact would be readily apparent from vantage points along Amberley Road and Russel Road. The use of appropriate materials would not sufficiently diminish this harm.
8. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of No 33, the previous permission and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Policies CP2 and DBE10 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Alterations. Amongst other things, these require that residential extensions complement the existing building and that developments safeguard and enhance the character of the urban environment. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) insofar as it seeks to ensure that developments add to the quality of areas. Furthermore, I have been referred to Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017 which requires that developments relate positively to their context. This emerging plan is at an advanced stage and has been through examination. Conflict with Policy DM9 therefore carries at least moderate weight against this proposal.

Other Consideration

9. The proposal would not result in harm to living conditions at nearby properties in terms of access to daylight. However, this is a requirement of the development plan and is not a reason to set aside the harm identified above.

Conclusion

10. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the advice of the Framework, which outweigh this conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Heron

INSPECTOR