



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2019

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/19/3235932

1A Flora Gardens, Chadwell Heath, Romford RM6 4BQ

- 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 Rajveer Bajwa against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref: 2617/19, dated 20 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with a rear dormer, hip to gable roof alteration, new windows to gable end, and two front roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion with a rear dormer, hip to gable roof alteration, new windows to gable end, and two front roof lights, at 1A Flora Gardens, Chadwell Heath, Romford RM6 4BQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 2617/19, dated 20 June 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: VD058/PL01; VD058/PL02; VD058/PL03; VD058/PL04; VD058/PL05; and VD058/PL06.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural matter

2. The description of the appeal proposal used by the Council on the decision notice more accurately sets out the development proposed than the description on the original planning application form. I also note that the appellant has adopted this description on the appeal form. I have, therefore, used this for the purposes of the appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2018 (the Local Plan) expects new development to respect the local character of the area in terms of layout, form, style, massing, scale, density, orientation, materials, and design; and to make a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location. Local Plan Policy LP30 specifically addresses house extensions and seeks to ensure that these complement the character of the original building, particularly in terms of scale, style, form and materials; are subordinate to the existing building in terms of size, scale or height; and maintain or improve the appearance of the locality or street scene.
5. The appeal building is a two story, end of terrace, house with a hipped roof. It is finished in render with the roof covered in red tiles. The surrounding area is comprised generally of short, two storey terraces. Those on Flora Gardens, Roxy Avenue, parts of Grove Road and Conway Crescent are of a similar age. Fauna Close, leading off Flora Gardens is a newer addition consisting of mid-Twentieth Century semi-detached houses with gable ended roofs. To the north of Flora Gardens and on the west side of Grove Road are more modern two and three storey dwellings and some blocks of flats rising to four storeys. The clearest defining feature of the area is, however, the terraced format of the majority of the buildings.
6. The appeal proposal would see the existing hipped roof of the house converted to a gable end and a box dormer constructed on the rear roof slope. The appeal building is not listed building nor is it within a conservation area.
7. Flora Gardens is characterised by short terraces, that appear to have originally been built with hipped roofs on the end properties. The houses feature two storey bay windows on the front elevations, either with a pitched roof or a flat roof. Combined with the terraced form, this creates a strong visual rhythm in the street. When I visited the site, I observed that the house at the opposite end of the terrace that contains the appeal building has had the hipped roof converted to a gable end. I also saw that both the end houses of the terrace containing numbers 36 to 48 Flora Gardens have similarly been converted to a gable end. Although hipped roofs are common in the area, particularly on houses of a similar age to the houses in Flora Gardens, there are gabled roofs in proximity to the appeal building. The close spacing of the terraces elsewhere in the street reduces the visual prominence of the hipped ends. In addition to this, the conversion of the hipped roof of the appeal building to a gable would rebalance the visual form of the terrace.
8. It was also apparent from my visit that a number of other properties in the near vicinity of the appeal building have large box dormers added that are of a similar size and design to the appeal proposal, in particular the adjoining property at 1 Flora Gardens. Three properties on Grove Road near the junction with Flora Gardens adjacent to the appeal building also have rear dormers. Whilst box dormers of this type and size are not widespread, they are certainly a characteristic of the area.
9. As the appeal building is an end terraced house adjacent to the gardens of Grove Road which run perpendicular to it, the proposed rear dormer would be visible from the street. However, the appeal building is set back from the highway, which would reduce the visual effect, and the proposed dormer would be seen in the context of the rear dormers on the houses on Grove Road. I

also note that there is a similar extension at 31 Conway Crescent which is also an end house near a junction. The proposed dormer would also be visible from parts of Westfield Gardens to the north, although from here it would be seen in context with the similar dormer at number 1 Flora Gardens which is also visible. Other rear dormers on Flora Gardens are visible from other points to the north.

10. I have noted that the Council consider that the proposal is not consistent with the guidance in Redbridge Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD). The SPD is, however, guidance and not prescriptive. The policies in the development plan expect new development to have regard to its context. Many of the other dormers that I saw diverge from the guidance in the SPD and, whilst I accept that these may predate the guidance or may have been constructed under permitted development, they are nonetheless part of the context of the appeal building. Although the proposed dormer is large, the existing house is also substantial. The proposed dormer would not visually dominate the existing house or appear disproportionately large.
11. Drawing these strands together, the appeal proposal would not disrupt the terraced form, or the strong rhythm formed by the bay windows which are the most noticeable characteristics of the street. It would also restore the visual symmetry of the terrace in which it is located. The proposed dormer window, whilst large, would not be unduly visually prominent and would be similar to other dormer windows in the near vicinity. Taken as a whole and given that the appeal building is neither listed nor located within a conservation area, I do not find that the appeal proposal would have a detrimental visual effect.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to character and appearance of area. It would not conflict with the relevant requirements of Policies LP26 and LP30 of the local plan.

Conditions

13. I have had to the conditions that have been suggested by the Council. In order to provide certainty regarding what has been approved, I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings. In the interests of appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area, it is also necessary to impose a condition requiring that the extension be constructed in matching materials to the existing building.

Conclusion

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

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR