The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2020

by Zoë Franks Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/20/3244687
4 Reed Pond Walk, Romford, RM2 5PB

- 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 D Park against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
- The application Ref P1243.19, dated 6 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2019.
- The development proposed is a two storey rear extension and internal reconfiguration.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey rear extension and internal reconfiguration at 4 Reed Pond Walk, Romford, RM2 5PB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P1243.19 dated 6 August 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:

    - The character and appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area (CA); and
    - The significance of a non-designated heritage asset, 4 Reed Pond Walk (No. 4).

Reasons

Character and Appearance of CA

3. The CA is significant as it covers several phases of predominantly residential development, ranging from the early to the mid-20th century, which began with the Arts & Crafts inspired Gidea Hall Estate.

4. No. 4 is in the original Gidea Hall Estate area ("the Estate") of the CA which is a residential area of predominantly detached dwellings located in large plots with mature planting, including many trees and boundary hedges and wide roads. The Estate contains large green spaces including Romford Golf Course, Raphael Park and other wooded areas. The Estate's significance as part of the CA is that it was designed and built following an early 20th century competition intended to produce a garden suburb of high-quality design and practical housing reflecting the ideals of that time. There is a variety of house type and design and the first 159 properties built include many examples by renowned Arts and

Crafts architects. Although all the original houses are unique, there is a cohesion with many shared characteristics such as prominent roof profiles including tall chimney stacks, red brick or white rendering with darker tiled rooves, and often small pane glazing.

5. No. 4 contributes to the significance of the CA as one of the original houses constructed as part of the exhibition in 1911 of the "The Hundred Best Houses". For the same reason, No. 4 is also a non-designated heritage asset as it was recognised at the time as being a good example of architecture and functionality within the Arts and Crafts movement. The property is an attractive red-brick detached two storey house with a darker coloured tiled and pitched roof with flared over-hanging eaves. The plot is long and narrow, the building itself being relatively close to the adjoining dwellings at Nos. 2 and 6, but a good distance from those to the rear. The properties at Nos. 2,4 and 6 complement each other due to being the same age and the use of similar materials.

6. The submitted plans show that the proposed rear extension would be stepped back from a depth of around 4 metres at ground floor level to around 3 metres at first floor level and indented by around 1 metre from the edge of the host property at either side. This means that views from outside of the property would be extremely limited and fleeting at most. The most significant view from public realm would be from the footway and carriageway of Reed Pond Walk at the front of the property but even that view would be only be glimpsed through the narrow gap between No.4 and 2 Reed Pond Walk ("No.2"). This view would be further obscured by the 3 mature TPO trees, particularly when in leaf. Views through the gaps between houses on Parkway and Meadway would be even more limited due to the depth of the back gardens, mature planting and trees, and existing buildings. It would be possible to see the proposed development from some of the adjoining back gardens, but these views would be limited and would not impact on the overall appearance of the area.

7. Accordingly, the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the CA or its significance as a designated heritage asset. As such it would not be in conflict with Policies CP17 and DC61 promoting good design and CP18 and DC68 relating to the preservation or enhancement of heritage assets and conservation areas in the London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies and Development Plan Document 2008 ("the Development Plan") or policies 7.4 and 7.8 relating to design and heritage assets in the London Plan 2016 ("the Spatial Plan").

8. The Heritage SPD April 2011, Residential and Extensions SPD 2011, Gidea Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal are all material planning considerations. The proposed development is not on conflict with the guidance in these documents, which accords with the relevant Development Plan policies and the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework"). Reference has been made to policies in the emerging London Plan. These can be attributed weight depending on their progress towards adoption, but in any case they carry forward the thrust of the current adopted policies and hence do not weigh against the proposal.

9. I have taken into account the Inspector's decision on the previous appeal (APP/B5480/D/18/3214484) in relation to the character and appearance of the

CA but this was for a much larger extension at the rear with additional elements at the side and hence is not directly comparable.

Significance of non-designated heritage asset

10. It is agreed by the parties that No.4 itself is a non-designated heritage asset which means that the effect of the proposal on its own significance should also be considered. The proposed extension would alter the roof profile at the rear of the host property so that most of the existing eaves would no longer be present (save for approximately 1 metre on each side). On the submitted plans, the proposed eaves on the double hipped roof appear to be at the same level as the original eaves and the proposed roof ridgelines are lower than the bottom of the chimney stack. This helps the proposed extension to appear subservient to the host property. The prominent high chimney stack at the rear would be unaltered and visible in its entirety from all views, and the shape of the existing roof would not change when viewed from the front or side of the building. The roof and chimney do not currently appear as originally designed as the chimney stack is not in the centre of the rear elevation but to the left side when viewed facing from the rear garden. There appears to have been an early side alteration to the property which extended the width of the building resulting in the original chimney no longer appearing in the centre of the rear elevation. It would be possible to read the roof as it appears now, even with the double hipped roof on the first floor extension, through the retention of approximately 1m of eaves on the host building at each side and the lower ridge height of the proposed extension roof.

11. The windows and doors in the rear elevation would be removed but it appears that some of these openings have been relocated over time (as is evidenced by differing brickwork). The windows proposed as shown in the plans consist of small paned glazing to match the original windows and style of the house. On balance, any harm to the roof shape or from the loss of the rear windows and doors would be negligible.

12. Taking the above into account, the proposed development would not harm the significance of No.4 as a non-designated heritage asset and would therefore not be contrary to the Development Plan and other policies as set out in the previous section. I have considered the previous Inspector's decision as referred to above but have given it little weight regarding the effect of the proposal on the significance of No.4 as a non-designated heritage asset for the same reasons as set out previously.

Other Matters

13. Objections have been raised regarding the impact that the proposal would have on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, particularly in terms of privacy and light.

14. Any issues regarding overlooking from the windows in the flank walls of the proposed extension can be controlled through conditions requiring the installation and retention of obscure glazing to those windows and that the flank windows at first floor level shall not be capable of being opened. The appellant has also suggested obscure glazing to the new window on the existing side elevation which faces No. 2 but this would not be appropriate in a sole window in a bedroom. The proposed additional window on the existing

wall is directly adjacent to the current row of three first floor windows facing No.2 and will not create unacceptable levels of overlooking due in part to it being a bedroom window. In addition, the high fence and hedge between the two properties provide screening. There is no evidence that there would be any significant impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of light.

15. The proposed development would not conflict with the development plan policies, particularly Policy DC61 regarding living conditions, or the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document intended to protect the living conditions of neighbours, or the Framework.

Conditions

16. I am imposing the conditions as set out in the Schedule. The three year period in which the development may be implemented is a statutory requirement. I have imposed the conditions relating to approval of all materials and for the development to be built in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of the character and appearance of the CA and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset (but I have altered the timing relating to the approval of materials so that it is not a pre-commencement condition). I have imposed the conditions regarding the glazing to ensure acceptable living standards for future residents of the host dwelling and to protect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. I have altered the wording suggested by the Council in relation to these conditions to provide clarity regarding the timing of the implementation. The condition imposed removing the permitted development rights for windows and openings in the flank walls is also to protect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties which is necessary due to the proximity of the adjacent houses.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Zoë Franks

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) The development hereby permitted must be commenced 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:

   Ordnance Survey Map

   RPWR-01

   RPWR-02

   24949se-02

   24949se03

3) No works above ground works shall take place in relation to any of the development hereby approved until samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the building are submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

4) Notwithstanding the detail on the submitted plans, the extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the additional first floor window in the existing side wall has been fitted with clear glazing and once installed the clear glazing shall be retained thereafter.

5) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the windows at ground floor level in the side walls of the proposed extension have been fitted with obscure glass not less than level 4 on the standard scale of obscurity and shall be retained thereafter.

6) The extension hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the windows at first floor level in the side walls of the proposed extension have been fitted with obscure glass not less than Level 4 on the standard scale of obscurity, and no part of those windows shall be capable of being opened and shall be retained thereafter.

7) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), no windows or other opening (other than those shown on the submitted and approved plan) shall be formed in the flank walls of the building hereby permitted, unless specific permission under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has first been sought and obtained in writing from the local planning authority.