



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2020

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/20/3247067

45a Grosvenor Road, Wanstead, London E11 2EW

- 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 Mustafa Iqbal against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 4487/19, dated 21 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is proposed single storey ground floor front and rear extension including first floor side and part rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area (CA). The text on the CA plan states that the CA's special interest is derived from the way it displays a good example of varied late-Victorian and Edwardian speculative housing development overlaid on an 18th century designed landscape. Although the scale, form and design of the properties along Grosvenor Road varies, there is a unifying and pleasant sense of spaciousness, with front garden areas and street trees significant in their contribution to the prevailing character and appearance.
4. Redbridge Local Plan (RLP) policies LP26 and LP30 both seek to ensure that developments secure high-quality design. These policies set out a range of criteria to help achieve that aim, amongst which are that development respects local character and that it is well integrated with, and has regard amongst other things to, the surrounding area and surrounding streets in terms of layout, form, scale and massing. To support these aims, the Council's 'Housing Design' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides further guidance on various types of extension, including two storey and first floor side extensions and corner plots.
5. The proposed first floor side extension would result in a substantial increase to the appeal property's flank elevation in terms of its height, length and bulk. It would directly adjoin the rear of the Stanstead Road footpath and would, as a consequence, present a bulky, lengthy and unrelieved flank elevation to

Stanstead Road in a highly visible location. Furthermore, the extension's depth and height would combine with the two-storey rear elevation's width to create a bulky and dominant feature at the rear of No. 45a.

6. The Council are content that the first floor side extension would be of sufficiently limited width relative to the existing front elevation so as to satisfy part of the SPD's guidance¹. However, at the rear its height, bulk and width would be overpowering and overtly prominent on an open rear aspect. Nor would the side extension be set back from the front of the house at first floor level or set away from Stanstead Road at the side. This would be clearly contrary to other elements of the SPD's advice and guidance² and would compound the extension's incongruous and obtrusive nature.
7. The proposed extension also includes single storey elements to both the front and rear elevations. The additional projection of the ground floor rear element beyond the two-storey extension adds to the extension's overall scale and bulk, compounding its excessive overall scale. This ground floor element would also 'creep' beyond the adjacent single storey rear extension at No. 45 but would not do so excessively. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect would be an excessively large and incongruously bulky extension. The front extension, whilst more modest, would also strike a jarring note against the chamfered corners of the two-storey bay and the hipped roof form of the main house, thereby causing further harm to character and appearance.
8. The proposed extension would be a dominant, over-powering and jarringly large extension to an otherwise modest end-of-terrace property. On a prominent corner plot, it would fail to respect local character and show a lack of regard for the nature, form and layout of the surrounding streets. For these reasons, the proposed extension would fail to secure the high-quality design that RLP policies LP26 and LP30 seek to secure and would be in conflict with those policies.
9. RLP policy LP33 seeks to ensure that the borough's heritage assets will be conserved, protected and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their special interest, character or appearance. For the reasons already outlined, the proposal would also fail to conserve, protect or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, contrary to RLP policy LP33. This would amount to harm to the character and appearance of the CA, albeit that the harm to the CA's significance would, in the National Planning Policy Framework's terms, be less than substantial.
10. Where less than substantial harm would arise, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The proposal would remove an existing conservatory at the rear of the property. This, the appellant claims, would be of benefit to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Although its removal would be capable of being a public benefit, the conservatory is a small, discrete and unobtrusive structure at the rear of the house not widely visible beyond the site boundary. Any benefit would be limited and the weight that I give it would also be correspondingly limited.

¹ SPD paragraph 3.5.1

² SPD paragraphs 3.5.1, 3.5.3 and 3.5.4

11. The proposed extension would increase living space and provide the appellant with the opportunity of updating the living accommodation within the appeal property. These are however private, not public, benefits and would not weigh in support of the proposal.
12. Heritage assets are irreplaceable and great weight should be given to their conservation. Therefore, as set out in paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework, there are no public benefits that outweigh the less than substantial harm that would occur in this instance.

Other Matters

13. The decision notice sets out two reasons for refusal. Both are underpinned by the statement that the proposal would fail to maintain and / or enhance the appearance or character of the Conservation Area. However, the second of the two refers in generalised terms to the proposal being 'an unneighbourly addition' and as having a 'serious and adverse effect on the amenities enjoyed by occupants of neighbouring properties'. Which amenities, what those effects are, and upon which properties is not stated. Nor does the Council's officer report elaborate further. Given this ambiguity, and as I have already concluded that the appeal should fail in respect of character and appearance, I have not considered this matter further.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR