
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2020

by Paul Thompson DipTRP MAUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/D/20/3248787
110 Old Park Ridings, Southgate N21 2EP

- 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 George Gyekum against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 19/03486/HOU, dated 10 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is part single part two storey extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the Grange Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site concerns a detached two-storey house with rooms in the attic situated within the Grange Park Conservation Area (CA). The CA is located to the south west of Enfield and is centred around three primarily residential streets, The Chine, Old Park Ridings and The Grangeway. The west of the area also features three parades of shops and a railway station.
4. The Council's appraisal¹ of the area (CA Appraisal) describes the key factors that give the CA its special interest. These include, but are not limited to, the cohesive group of houses and shops, developed as a high-quality planned suburb closely linked to road and rail transport, in two phases between 1910 and 1914 and in the 1920s and 1930s. The earlier parts of the area possess a unity of style deriving from a range of features influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and are mainly of two broad house types distinguished by high quality details and materials. The houses are either open or enclosed by low walls at the front, so the houses are prominent in the street scene. The rear aspects of the houses are primarily visible from the gardens of neighbouring properties, except in locations where rear gardens adjoin a street.
5. Many of the houses within the CA have been extended or altered over time, but the area generally appears to be in good condition, as referred to in the CA appraisal and management² documents. Furthermore, the Council introduced

¹ Grange Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal (Approved June 2015).

² Grange Park Conservation Area Management Proposals (Approved June 2015).

an Article 4 Direction in 2008, which brought many extensions and alterations under planning controls. Despite the presence of modern alterations and extensions to houses in the CA, its significance today lies in the cohesive group of Arts and Crafts and interwar housing within a planned early to mid-20th Century suburb.

6. The front of the appeal property, like many of the others in the CA is constructed of red brick, a stone mullion canted bay window to the ground floor, tiled roof and timber framed porch and retain its leaded casements. Meanwhile, the rear incorporates a two-storey lean-to projection that meets the half-hipped projection from the roof at attic level. This rear roof form and the window arrangement are both similar to those of the houses to either side. The cohesion of the architecture of the appeal property with those neighbouring therefore makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA, and thereby its understanding and significance.
7. I appreciate that the proposal would utilise a carefully considered palette of materials, including windows and doors, and the flat roof and hipped elements of the first floor would be set down from the eaves and ridge of the house respectively. However, the form and detailing of the majority of the existing rear façade would be subsumed and overwhelmed by the proposal. Moreover, the scale and appearance of the proposal would appear ungainly, unduly dominant and imposing in relation to the host property. The proposal would also dilute the architectural cohesion between the property and those situated to either side, particularly in respect of the lean-to projection, which is a feature repeated on all three properties.
8. Given that the significance of a conservation area is more widely experienced, proposals must be judged according to their effect on the area as a whole and must therefore have a moderate degree of prominence. Although there are no properties to the rear and the garden of the appeal property is screened from the Bush Hill Park Golf Course by mature planting, the proposal would be visible from neighbouring properties and their gardens. With this in mind, the proposal would be sufficiently prominent within the CA that it would be harmful to its character and appearance.
9. The statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) is a matter of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation should be taken into account in determining applications. Meanwhile, paragraph 193 of the Framework also advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation.
10. The proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance, which would have a negative effect on its significance as a designated heritage asset. In my view the harm that I have identified, would equate to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Paragraph 196 of the Framework identifies that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of proposals.
11. The proposed extensions would improve the internal living environment of the house, which would better meet the needs of the appellant and his family.

There would be improvements in terms of energy and environmental efficiency associated with the built fabric of the proposal, including the source of materials, and its use thereafter. These would be largely private benefits restricted to the appellant, although there would be a small environmental benefit to the public in terms of the minimisation of energy consumption.

12. I also appreciate that there is agreement between the main parties that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, but the absence of harm would not equate to a public benefit.
13. Taking the above together, the public benefits I have outlined would not justify allowing development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA. Therefore, in accordance with paragraphs 193 and 196 of the Framework, considered together, I conclude that the public benefits do not outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm that I have identified.
14. In reaching the above conclusion, I have also had regard to the presence of other extensions in the locality to which I have been referred. Except the projection to the front of 114 Old Park Ridings, which appears to be of some age, the written descriptions of extensions before me do not provide sufficient information to enable a comparison to be made with the appeal proposal. In particular, I am not aware of the appearance of those properties prior to and following their extension. Nevertheless, the presence of other extensions would not justify the harm that would result from the appeal proposal to the character and appearance of the host property and the CA.
15. Despite the absence of objections received from neighbouring occupiers, I conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Grange Park Conservation Area. Hence, the appeal proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraphs 192 and 193 of the Framework and conflicts with the design aims of Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016); Policies CP30 and CP31 of the Council's Core Strategy; and Policies DMD6, DMD11, DMD13, DMD14 DMD37 and DMD44 of the Council's Development Management Document, particularly in respect of the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets.

Other Matters

16. I acknowledge the appellant's concerns with the conduct of the Council in the determination of the planning application, including the approach to the pre-application advice given, the timeframe for the determination and the approach to and consistency of its decision-making, but in reaching my decision I have been concerned only with the individual merits of the appeal scheme in relation to the relevant policies and evidence before me.

Conclusion

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

Paul Thompson

INSPECTOR