



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2020

by Alex Hutson MRTPI CMLI MArborA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/20/3249444

8 Raymond Avenue, South Woodford, London E18 2HG

- 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 and Mrs J & N Bjerke against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 4850/19, dated 26 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is 'First floor addition including the extension of the roof to match. Roof dormer to the rear. Single-storey, full width rear extension of 4m.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of 6 Raymond Avenue, with particular regard to outlook and sense of enclosure.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two storey, semi-detached dwelling with a large rear garden, located within a wider residential area. Raymond Avenue predominantly comprises semi-detached dwellings. Many of these have first floor side extensions in one form or another. Some are set back from the main façade and down from the main ridge of their host dwellings. Others are flush with the main façade and continue the main ridge height.
4. Where these are set back and set down, they appear subordinate to the host dwellings and tend to better allow the semi-detached properties to be read as a distinctive pair. This assists with maintaining the character and appearance of the streetscene and the prevailing semi-detached pattern of development along Raymond Avenue. In examples where adjacent first floor side extensions are not set back and set down, this dilutes considerably the ability to read semi-detached dwellings as a distinctive pair and affords something of a terracing effect. This, in my view, detracts from the character and appearance of the

streetscene. Examples of such relationships include 16 and 18, 21 and 23 and 25 and 27 Raymond Avenue, photographs of which have been provided by and referred to by the appellants.

5. The appeal property has a first floor side extension, which is set back a degree from the main façade, and which incorporates a catslide roof. The adjoining property, 6 Raymond Avenue, has a first floor side extension set back a degree from the main façade and down a degree from its ridge. The subordinate appearance of these side extensions allows the appeal property and 6 Raymond Avenue to be read as a distinctive pair. In addition, the low catslide roof and set back of the first floor side extension of the appeal property provides visual spacing between it and the adjacent property, 10 Raymond Avenue, which also has a first floor side extension, though without any set back or lower ridge height. These factors contribute positively to the character and appearance of the streetscene and area.
6. The proposal effectively seeks to replace the existing first floor side extension with one which would sit flush with the main façade and which would follow the main ridge height. It also seeks to construct a full width single storey rear extension and to convert the loft with the inclusion of a rear roof dormer and some front rooflights.
7. The Redbridge Housing Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2019 (SPD) sets out generally that extensions and alterations should respect the original character of the host property, be subordinate to the host property and complement the character of the street. The SPD provides specific guidance for the design of first floor side extensions, single storey rear extensions and rear dormers. For first floor side extensions, it advises that these should be set back from the main façade and down from the ridge to appear subordinate to the host dwelling. For single storey rear extensions, it advises that these should be no more than 3.5 metres (m) in depth for a semi-detached dwelling. For rear dormers, it advises that these should be subordinate in size to the roof and should not appear dominant. It is advised that this can be achieved by setting them at least 0.5m below the ridge, 1m above the eaves and in from the side shared boundary, and in the case of a hipped roof, 0.5m in from this.
8. The single storey rear extension would be 4m in depth and would thus be in excess of the depth for such extensions as advised in the SPD. Nonetheless, an extension of such a depth would not, in my view, dominate the host dwelling and would maintain a large rear garden. As such, it would not appear particularly out of scale with the appeal property and given its location, would be discreet in wider views. I also note that the advised 3.5m depth for single storey rear extensions in the SPD relates more to neighbour living conditions matters than to matters relating to character and appearance. Additionally, the Council's officer report makes little reference to the impact of the single storey rear extension on the character and appearance of the area.
9. However, the first floor side extension, due to its lack of setback from the main façade of the appeal property and lack of set down from its ridge, would fail to appear as a subordinate addition and would fail to respect the original character of the host property. Furthermore, its close proximity to the existing first floor side extension of 10 Raymond Avenue, which the appeal property shares the same building line as, would create a noticeable terracing effect and would substantially dilute the appeal property and 6 Raymond Avenue being

read as a distinctive pair of semi-detached dwellings. This would appear at odds with the prevailing pattern of development along the road and would give rise to considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area.

10. Whilst my attention is drawn to a similar first floor side extension at 47 Bressy Grove which was allowed on appeal¹, the property adjacent to this, 49 Bressy Grove, has not been extended at first floor level. Thus, a degree of spacing is provided between these properties which avoids a terracing effect and allows 47 Bressy Grove and its adjoining property, 45 Bressy Grove, to be read as a distinctive pair. In addition, 47 and 49 Bressy Grove have a staggered relationship. Given these factors, the context of the first floor side extension at 47 Bressy Grove is not wholly comparable to the context of the one before me and does not justify a planning permission. Moreover, planning permission for this first floor side extension, along with a number of others referred to by the appellants, some of which I am informed were approved in 1989 and 2014, precede the adoption of the Redbridge Local Plan 2018 (Local Plan) and the SPD and were thus considered under a different planning policy context. Other first floor side extensions², in addition to those I have already mentioned, are also referred to by the appellants. However, these are either set back or set down a degree, maintain a degree of space with the neighbouring property or relate to detached dwellings. Therefore, these also do not share the same context and are not wholly comparable to the proposal before me and thus do not justify a planning permission. In any event, each case should be considered on its own merits.
11. The front rooflights would be modest in scale and I note that the Council does not appear to raise any particular concerns with these. I have no substantive reasons to either. However, the rear dormer would be set down only marginally from the ridge, set back only marginally from the eaves and set in only marginally from the side with 6 Raymond Avenue, contrary to the guidance of the SPD. As such, it would overly dominate the rear roof slope and would fail to appear sufficiently subordinate to the appeal property. This would be apparent from surrounding houses and their gardens and would add to the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have already identified.
12. The appellants suggest that the rear dormer could be built under permitted development rights and that they could undertake such works before reapplying for a first floor side extension. Nevertheless, I have not been provided with any plans showing such a rear dormer on its own. Furthermore, given that it would be likely to protrude somewhat beyond the existing side hipped roof slope, it would be likely to require some further alterations to incorporate it into the roof of any alternative future first floor side extension. There is therefore little evidence to demonstrate that this represents a realistic fallback position which the appellants intend to or are likely to implement. In any event, I have considered the proposal as a whole and on the basis of all the plans before me. Additionally, though the appellants cite some other examples of rear dormers in the locality, I observed that some of these, including two to the immediate rear of the appeal property and next door at 10 Raymond Avenue, are set back a generous degree from the eaves. This affords them a more subordinate appearance in relation to their host dwellings than would be the case for the one proposed as part of this appeal.

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/15/3035751

² Including: 3 Byron Avenue; 29, 35, 43 and 44 Raymond Avenue; and 44 Broadwalk

13. I therefore consider that the proposal, by virtue of the scale and design of the first floor side extension and rear dormer, would give rise to considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict Policies LP26 and LP30 of the Local Plan, which require, amongst other things, development in general to respect the character and appearance of the area and for household extensions to complement the character of buildings, to be subordinate to the existing building and to maintain or improve the appearance of the locality or streetscene.
14. It would also conflict with the guidance of the SPD which advises that extensions and alterations should respect the original character of the host property, be subordinate to the host property and complement the character of the street. Given that the SPD was recently adopted, I afford such conflict substantial weight.

Living conditions – 6 Raymond Avenue

15. The property of 6 Raymond Avenue has some rear facing ground floor windows / glazed doors in close proximity to the shared boundary fence with the appeal property. I understand that these serve a habitable room. The current absence of development along the shared boundary is likely to afford the occupiers of 6 Raymond Avenue a good level of outlook from these rear facing windows / glazed doors and a good sense of space and openness.
16. The single storey rear extension would, according to the submitted plans, protrude considerably above the height of the boundary fence. This, in combination with its 4m length, and in such a close proximity to the abovementioned rear facing windows / glazed doors, would result in a harmful loss of outlook and sense of enclosure and for the occupiers of 6 Raymond Avenue with detriment to their living conditions. Though the occupiers of this property have not objected, this in itself does not indicate a lack of harm.
17. The appellants mention that a single storey rear extension to a depth of 3m could be built under permitted development rights. However, the single storey rear extension proposed would be greater in length than this and thus, this matter is of little relevance. It is also suggested that a single storey rear extension of up to 6m in depth could be built under the prior approval process. Nonetheless, the appellants have not sought to go down this route and as such, this does not represent a valid fallback position at this time. Neither of these matters therefore justify a planning permission. Whilst the appellants cite other properties³ with single storey rear extensions, I have not been provided with detailed information relating to these and in any event, and as previously mentioned, each case should be considered on its own merits.
18. In light of the above, the proposal would be conflict with Policies LP26 and LP30 of the Local Plan, which require, amongst other things, development in general to not result in an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, including in relation to outlook, and for household extensions to maintain an acceptable outlook from surrounding dwellings.
19. It would also conflict with the guidance of the SPD which advises that single storey rear extensions for semi-detached dwellings do not exceed 3.5m in

³ Including: 12 and 14 Broadwalk; and 30, 44 and 46 Raymond Avenue

depth to avoid causing a significant loss of outlook or an increase sense of enclosure.

Other matters

20. The appellants assert that the proposal and resultant enlarged living space would improve their and their family's quality of life. However, such a private benefit is insufficient to outweigh the harms I have identified. Moreover, there are likely to be other ways in which to achieve this in a manner more sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of the occupiers of 6 Raymond Avenue.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters, including the living conditions of the occupiers of 10 Raymond Avenue with regard to outlook and light, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex Hutson

INSPECTOR