



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2020

by Steven Hartley BA (Hons) Dist.TP (Manc) DMS MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/20/3255290
57B Balfour Road, Ilford IG1 4JG

- 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 U Bhattibi against the decision of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 1235/20, dated 27 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a "loft conversion with rear dormer".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) describes the proposed development more fully as '*loft conversion with a rear dormer. Hip to gable roof alterations. Three front roof lights*'. I have considered the proposal on this basis as it more precisely reflects the development shown on the submitted plans.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the building and the area.

Reasons

4. Properties on Balfour Road are mainly two storey buildings with hipped roofs and a general absence of dormers on front roof elevations. Front outside amenity spaces are largely given over to off-street car parking. Rear outside amenity spaces are largely hidden from public view with only narrow spaces between the houses and apartments.
5. The appeal property itself forms one of a pair of semi-detached buildings, both of which retain their hipped roofs. They have double height bay windows fronting the road. The semi-detached properties retain a symmetrical appearance even though there has been a slight change to the roof of the appeal building above the front facing bay windows and where its double pitched roof has been removed. However, this does not significantly detract from the overall design symmetry of the two attached buildings.
6. While the appeal property includes two flats, the adjoining property is described as a single dwelling house.

7. The LPA raises no objection to the proposed front roof lights. I concur with such a view and I find that these would not significantly affect the design symmetry of the semi-detached buildings. However, the proposed replacement of the hipped roof by a straight gable, would fail to respect the overall balance and symmetry of the semi-detached buildings, thereby causing significant harm to the appearance of the properties and the character and appearance of the street scene.
8. The appellant accepts that the proposed rear box dormer would not meet the dimensions included in the Council's Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document 2018 (SPD). It would not be set back from the eaves by one metre or from its sides by one metre. The SPD aims to ensure that such extensions remain subservient to the host property. I find that, by virtue of its size and position, it would not be subservient to the host property and would be visually dominant.
9. I appreciate that the dormer would not be seen from public vantage points, but it would be visible by the occupants of properties opposite. Furthermore, a lack of visibility from public vantage points does not obviate the need to achieve good design.
10. I have taken into account the Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) issued for what the appellant describes as the exact same development for the adjoining property at 59 Balfour Road and issued on the basis that it would be permitted development¹(PD). However, I have no categorical information before me to show that there is a prospect of such adjoining development being carried out. There is, for example, no indication to that effect from the owners/occupiers or any evidence regarding Building Regulation details. Therefore, I can only give limited weight to the LDC in respect of determining this appeal. In the absence of certainty that the neighbouring PD development will be carried out, it is necessary that I reach a decision upon this appeal based on the circumstances that prevail now.
11. The appellant refers to other similar developments in the area, particularly regarding rear dormers, though the LPA considers that these would have been constructed utilising PD rights and specifically mentions those as such at No's 59 and 64 Balfour Road and No's 62 and 63 Wellesley Road. On my site visit, it was not possible to view the quoted cases from the appeal building or from the specific dwellings themselves, though I have observed them on the aerial photograph submitted by the appellant. Whilst there are several such roof extensions in the area, I find that they do not apply to the majority of properties. In any event, my concern with the appeal proposal also includes the detailed dimensions of what is proposed when compared to the SPD.
12. I have taken into account the appeal decision quoted by the appellant at 117 Wakefield Road in Newham² but this is some distance away from the appeal property and within a different Borough.
13. On my site visit I was able to see that there are other semi-detached properties on Balfour Road with one straight gable and one hipped roof though they are few in number and are not the norm. I have no information before me

¹ Ref 1292/20

² APP/G5750/D/17/3168144

as to the circumstances pertaining to them, but in any event, I find there is no reason to perpetuate their unbalanced appearance.

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would conflict with policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2018 which requires development to respect the local character of the area; with policy LP30 which aims to ensure that extensions are subordinate to their host properties in terms of size and scale and with the SPD which has a similar purpose.

Other Matters

15. I appreciate that the proposed development would provide extra space for what the appellant describes as a cramped flat. However, such a consideration does not outweigh the significant harm which I have found regarding the main issue.

Conclusion

16. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Steven Hartley

INSPECTOR