



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2020

by K Savage BA MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/20/3244650

22 Tresco Gardens, Seven Kings, Ilford IG3 9NH

- 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 & Mrs Surjit Soor against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 5480/17, dated 6 December 2017, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side and rear extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appellants' submissions include a number of drawings amended by hand which formed part of deliberations with the Council at the application stage. However, the Council indicates that it was ultimately the original drawings that it determined the application against. The evidence before me does not indicate that these later drawings were accepted by the Council or subject to public consultation. Moreover, the hand drawn alterations are not sufficiently precise to understand the exact nature of the amended scheme. For the avoidance of doubt, therefore, I have considered the proposal against the original drawings.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the Bungalow Estate Conservation Area (the BECA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a detached, two storey dwelling located on a residential street of similarly scaled, but primarily semi-detached dwellings. The site lies within the BECA, described as an extensive bungalow estate laid out in the 1920s and 1930s in often spacious gardens.
5. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2014) identifies the special interest of the BECA as lying in its loose grain and wide, open streets, its enclosed nature with few views out, its exclusively quiet, residential character and its prevailing bungalow architecture which displays an overall similarity of scale and form, particularly through a variety of Arts and Crafts-inspired decorative detailing. Notably, the two storey dwellings on Tresco Gardens are described as 'anomalous' to the character of the area. Indeed, there is little analysis of the

dwelling on Tresco Gardens amongst the Council's guidance for the BECA, and I saw the interwar two storey dwellings were in contrast to the homogenous bungalows which characterise surrounding streets and the BECA generally.

6. Despite the obvious contrast with the bungalows, the dwellings in Tresco Gardens still make a positive contribution to the significance of the BECA, by continuing the plot sizes and general grid layout of the wider conservation area, and by exhibiting some of the prevailing design characteristics, including rendered finishes, red clay roof tiles and half-timbering mock-Tudor inserts. The dwellings themselves also show consistency in the designs of their front gables and hipped roofs which add visual interest to the street scene.
7. The appeal site is further anomalous in being a detached dwelling amongst semi-detached pairs, though it shares design details with some of its neighbours, notably the prominent front gable and smaller gable over the front door, along with the hipped roof to the side and distinctive corner window at first floor level. In many ways, it stands as a semi-detached dwelling without a counterpart.
8. The existing single storey garage to the side would be replaced by a two storey side extension which would create an almost symmetrical frontage, with a similar lower gable detail, corner window and hipped roof to the side. The existing gap in the built form between Nos 22 and 24 above the garage would be significantly infilled, but I saw that gaps between other properties in the street have been narrowed or infilled completely by side extensions. The proposal in this case would leave a gap for a side passage, similar to the gap between Nos 23 and 25 directly opposite. A similar gap would be retained to the opposite side, which would ensure the dwelling still appeared as a detached dwelling within the street scene.
9. Though the proposal would add considerable massing to the dwelling, it would remain smaller than the combined massing of the surrounding semi-detached pairs and would not appear excessive or dominant in scale. The recessed position of the first floor element behind the main triangular front gable would provide an element of subservience consistent with other dwellings in the street. Given the detached nature of the dwelling, and the variety in design within the street, I am not persuaded that more substantial recessing of the extension or lowering of the roofline as sought by the Council is necessary. The replication of the front gable detail and first floor corner window would complement the existing character and help the extension assimilate into the street scene.
10. At the rear, the side extension would wrap around the building and align with the depth of the existing two storey closet wing. A further ground floor extension would project some 4 metres beyond this point and would span the full width of the dwelling. The rear elevations of the dwellings are not as uniform as at the front, but I saw a number of common features including two storey closet wings and/or bay windows. These provide articulation, vertical emphasis and visual interest to the upper parts of the buildings in vistas from the rear gardens.
11. The proposed extensions would result in a substantial, flat elevation at rear first floor level and the loss of the articulation provided by the closet wing. Whilst it would align with the depth of the existing closet wing, and the narrow projections at Nos 20 and 24, it would bring the whole of the rear first floor

building line noticeably rearward and beyond that of neighbouring properties. The combination of its depth, added width to the side and the bulk of the extended roof would result in a wide, flat expanse to the rear elevation with an uncharacteristic horizontal emphasis which would fail to respect the prevailing pattern of development, and would conflict with the guidance of the Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document (Sept 2019) which states that first floor extensions should generally be no more than half the width of the original rear elevation to ensure they are proportionate and subordinate.

12. The scale of the enlargement would be exacerbated by the ground floor extension which would sit clearly beyond the prevailing building line of neighbouring extensions. I accept that the deep rear garden of the property means the extended dwelling would not be excessive in terms of overall plot coverage, but viewed against its neighbours from adjacent gardens it would appear as a dominant and incongruous addition.
13. The appellant indicates that the appeal site is not restricted from undertaking extensions by the Article IV direction in force within the BECA. However, I have no evidence before me to establish whether any potential extensions would in fact be permitted development, or are realistic alternatives to the appeal scheme. Therefore, this does not alter my findings in respect of the main issue.
14. For the reasons set out, I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the BECA, in conflict with Policies LP26, LP30 and LP33 of the Redbridge Local Plan (March 2018), and Policies 7.4 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016). These policies seek high quality design in all development which is well integrated and supports extensions which complement the character of the building, particularly in terms of scale, style form and materials, and are subordinate to the existing building in terms of size, scale or height. They further seek to conserve, protect and enhance the Borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their special interest by, amongst other things, resisting development that does not preserve or enhance the character of designated heritage assets.
15. The harm identified to the significance of the BECA would be less than substantial, in the language of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Paragraph 196 advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
16. The provision of additional accommodation would be a largely private benefit for the appellant, with only a very modest public benefit in terms of adding to the size of accommodation generally. Some modest, and temporary, economic benefits would arise for local contractors in building the development. These modest benefits would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, to which I must give significant weight. Accordingly, the Framework does not indicate the proposal would amount to a sustainable form of development.

Other Matters

17. I have had regard to the appellant's strong concerns about the Council's handling of the application, including delays to and timing of correspondence.

Ultimately, these are matters for local government accountability and are not relevant to my decision, which I have assessed solely on its planning merits.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would result in conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole, which is not outweighed by other material considerations. Therefore, for the reasons given, I dismiss the appeal.

K. Savage

INSPECTOR