
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2021

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 April 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/20/3260545

237 Grafton Road, Dagenham RM8 1QP

- 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 Bharadia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 20/01627/FULL, dated 10 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2020.
 - The development is a proposed new 1 bed 1 person dwelling set over 2 storeys.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a proposed new 1 bed 1 person dwelling set over 2 storeys at 237 Grafton Road, Dagenham RM8 1QP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 20/01627/FULL, dated 10 August 2020, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Bharadia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.
3. I note the reference in the officer's report to policies within the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 Consultation Version, November 2019). However, as the Draft Local Plan may be subject to further change, I only attach limited weight to these policies.
4. Policy GG4 of the London Plan 2021 (LP) is unchanged from the Intend to Publish version, and has replaced the policies in the 2016 London Plan, both of which are referred to in the Council's decision.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed 1-bed, 1-person dwelling with particular reference to internal floorspace and outdoor amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, end-terrace property with off-street parking on Grafton Road. The site is bordered to the north by an amenity green at the corner of Grafton Road and Grafton Gardens. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature with a parade of shops nearby on Green Lane.
7. My attention has been drawn to a two-storey side extension that has been approved by the Council and remains extant. The Local Authority acknowledges that the appeal proposal would have the same dimensions as the approved extension.
8. The ridge height of the appeal proposal would be lower than the original ridge line of the host property, thus creating subservience. The front elevation at first floor level and the front roofslope would be flush with the existing house, and the single storey front projection would be similar to that on the dwelling at the other end of the terrace. As such the development would visually connect with the overall appearance of the host dwelling and the rest of the terrace, without dominating it, and respond to the original design characteristics. Given this, and bearing in mind the extension that has already been approved, I consider that the introduction of a building of this nature would not be harmful to the character of the area.
9. The Council argues that it is characteristic of Grafton Avenue and the Becontree Estate that there is an even number of houses in a row of terraced houses. However, this is not always the case. For example, I observed at my site visit a row of three houses at 200-204 Grafton Road. The Local Authority also advocates that all terraced houses share a porch, and end of terraced properties have their own front entrance. Yet I saw other dwellings in the streetscene which have their own front doors and do not share a porch, and end terrace properties with an entrance door to the side or front. Such assertions therefore carry limited weight in my reasoning.
10. I conclude that the proposal would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently it would comply with the requirements of policy BP11 of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document March 2011 (DPD) and policy GG4 of the London Plan 2021, which seek to ensure proposals relate to surrounding development, meet high standards of design and protect the character of an area. The appeal scheme would also be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Policy CP1 of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Core Strategy July 2010 and policy BP2 of the DPD are not relevant to the appeal as they relate to Vibrant Culture and Tourism and Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings respectively.

Living conditions

11. The plans show a two-storey dwelling, and the bedroom therein contains a single bed. I am satisfied that the development would be for a single occupant. There is no specific internal floorspace figure for such accommodation in the Government's Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard (NDSS). Taking a pragmatic approach, I note that the gross internal area of the dwelling, at 45 square metres, would exceed that required for a 1-

person, 1-bed flat (39 square metres). The bedroom size complies with the NDSS requirement. I therefore consider that the internal area of the dwelling would be suitable for its intended purpose and would provide appropriate accommodation for a future occupant.

12. The plans show a patio area of some 10 square metres to the rear of the property, accessed from the downstairs living room. There is no specific external amenity space figure in the Development Plan directly applicable to the appeal proposal. I note that policy BP5 of the DPD requires 20 square metres of external amenity space for a 1 bedroom flat, whereas D6 of the London Plan advocates that a minimum of 5 square metres of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwelling.
13. I acknowledge that the patio is small, but it would nevertheless provide an appropriate outdoor amenity space for a future resident. It would broadly meet the criteria of policy BP5, providing a private, safe sitting area that would receive some afternoon sunshine.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not result in harm to the living conditions of future occupiers of the dwelling with particular reference to internal floorspace and outdoor amenity space. The scheme would be compliant with policies BP5 and BP8 of the DPD, which require new development to provide adequate external amenity space and protect residential amenity. The proposal is also consistent with the advice in the Framework which seeks to ensure safe and healthy living conditions.

Other Matters

15. I note the third-party objections to the proposal in relation to parking and utilities. The parking issue has been addressed in the planning officer's report. With regard to utilities, I have not been provided with any compelling evidence to suggest that the formation of the extra household would place local services under stress.
16. Therefore, whilst I can understand the apprehension of local residents, their concerns are not supported by any substantive evidence that would justify the dismissal of the appeal on these grounds.

Conditions

17. No suggested conditions have been submitted by the Council. Nonetheless, I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the Framework.
18. In this respect in addition to the standard implementation condition, a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted drawings is reasonable and necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
19. To ensure a satisfactory appearance I impose a condition requiring external materials to match those on the existing dwelling. Conditions relating to cycle parking and refuse and recycling storage are necessary to ensure provision of such elements on the site.

Conclusion

20. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1999_PL01, 1999_PL04, 1999_PL05
- 3) The external finishes of the development hereby permitted shall match in material and colour those of the existing dwelling.
- 4) The dwelling shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with drawing no. 1999_PL04 for bicycles to be parked and that space shall thereafter be kept available for the parking of bicycles.
- 5) The dwelling shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with drawing no. 1999_PL04 for refuse storage and the space shall be kept available for that use thereafter.