



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2021

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/20/3260995

15 Heath Park Road, Romford RM2 5UB

- 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 Mrs Gail Webb against the decision of Council of London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1128.20, dated 10 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is removal of existing roof and chimney to be replaced with a Mansard style roof. Loft conversion to include rear dormer with balcony and opaque screening.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development in the banner heading above from the Council's decision notice and part E of the appeal form, as this more accurately and fully describes the proposal before me than the description provided in part 4 of the planning application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider street scene.
 - the living conditions of neighbours with regard overlooking and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. No.15 Heath Park Road (No.15) is an attractive two storey detached dwelling. It is located on the northern side of Heath Park Road forming part of a group of dwellings (Nos. 15 to 21) that have projecting gables to the road, with large first-floor bay windows, chimneys and a hipped roof. No.15 has a slightly smaller footprint than its neighbours, but this overall group uniformity in design makes a positive contribution to the street scene.
5. The appeal proposal is to retain the projecting gable but replace the existing hipped roof with a mansard style roof. Heath Park Road in its wider context is

characterised by a mixture of house types and forms, but roof forms are predominantly either pitched, with facing gables, or hipped. There are examples of mansards in reasonable proximity to No.15, as referred to by the appellant, but I did not find from my site visit mansards to be typical of this part of Heath Park Road, or the street scene. The proposed mansard roof would therefore be an uncharacteristic and incongruous addition that would cause harm to the appearance of the street and particularly the group of dwellings described above. The chimneys that are characteristic of the group would also be lost.

6. The proposed mansard style roof would increase the overall height of the roof to its ridge by around 900mm. This increase in height and the form of the mansard would increase the bulk and mass of the roof significantly. At first floor it is proposed to extend above the existing front door and porch to accommodate the stairs to the second-floor bedroom and ensuite bathroom. This would reduce the depth of the characteristics bay and result in the loss of the attractive symmetry of the front elevation. On the other side the proposed mansard is shown to over sail the first floor to accommodate the second-floor bathroom. Individually and in combination, these would compromise the architectural composition of the host house, diminish the emphasis of the projecting gable and exacerbate the bulk of the proposed roof form.
7. Because of the building line of houses on Heath Park Road, in views from the east, some of the bulk and massing of the proposed roof would be hidden by the neighbouring house at No.17 Heath Park Road. From the west, the roof form would not visually disappear but would be very prominent, appearing a dominant feature out of proportion and character with its neighbours and the street scene.
8. Whilst I note the statement made by the appellant that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder,' I find that in this case the proposed roof extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of both the host house and the street scene. It would therefore conflict with the guidance in the *Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Guidance* (2011) that extensions and alterations should not dominate or detract from the character of the original house and surrounding houses.
9. It would also conflict with Policy DC61 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2008) (CS) because it does not respond to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development or respect the scale, massing and height of the surrounding physical context.

Living conditions

10. To the rear, a balcony is proposed at second floor that would be recessed within the mansard roof. The rear of No.15 and its neighbours are visible from James Close and I saw from my site visit they have generous rear gardens which a good degree of privacy afforded close to the house. The proposed balcony would be located centrally within the rear elevation of No.15 and some distance from the common boundaries with its neighbours at Nos. 13 and 17 Heath Park Road (No.13 and No.17).
11. The proposed balcony would have opaque glazing to a height of 1.7m. Although there would be some potential for overlooking if standing at the very front of

the balcony, given it would be recessed, the outlook from it would predominantly be over the rear garden of No.15. This arrangement, combined with the location relative to neighbours and the height of the balcony, at second floor, means that any views to the gardens of No.13 and 17 would be from a reasonable distance and would not therefore result in a material loss of privacy.

12. As such, I conclude the proposed balcony would not cause harm to the living conditions of neighbours through overlooking or a loss of privacy. There would therefore be no conflict with the guidance in the Council's *Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document* (2010) that requires new development to be sited and designed such that there is no detriment to existing residential amenity. There would further be no conflict with CS Policy DC61 in so far as it requires planning permission not to be granted if it results in unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy to existing properties.

Conclusion

13. Notwithstanding my findings with regard to the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbours, for the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host house and street scene. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR