The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2021

by Darren Hendley BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/21/3271358
2 Meadway, Romford RM2 5NU

- 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 Michael Adrian against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
- The application Ref: P1965.20, dated 22 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2021.
- The development proposed is a first floor rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The name of the appellant on the planning appeal form, Mr M Drain, differs from the applicant details on the planning application form. The appellant has explained why and I am satisfied that the named appellant has the authority in order for the appeal to proceed. The appeal however proceeds in the name of the applicant, as is set out in the banner heading above, as only the named applicant from the planning application can ordinarily make an appeal.

3. The Revised National Planning Policy Framework was published during the course of the appeal. The national planning policy it provides in relation to heritage assets as is of relevance to this appeal has not changed. Accordingly, I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property comprises a detached house which lies on a spacious plot within the conservation area. It was constructed in an arts and craft style as part of the 1910/11 Gidea Park Exhibition houses and was designed by well-known architects of that time. It contains long sweeping roof planes that are typical of such a style, with large front and rear gable ends. There are also single storey elements to the rear, including a more recent flat roofed structure, beyond which is an expansive garden. Save from the rear flat roofed element, its exterior appears pleasingly intact. Its location as the first property

on this side of Meadway also affords views towards the rear of the plot over its garage and the rear garden of a neighbouring property on Parkway.

6. The Council's Gidea Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document (Character Appraisal) states that the general character of the conservation area bears evidence of the ideals of the time in its garden suburb layout, plot arrangement and architectural concepts. This is echoed in the Council's Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (2011) (Heritage SPD).

7. The Character Appraisal also identifies that Meadway is one of the most architecturally distinguished roads in the conservation area. It contains smaller cottage type dwellings that are detached and is defined by the sizes of the plots and houses. The properties are individually designed, yet they maintain their original sense of proportion as an important aspect of their significance. The appeal property positively contributes in this way to what is an aesthetically pleasing residential environment.

8. The proposal would extend the existing rear gable end further back so that it would project at first floor level over the single storey elements. A particular effect of extending in this way is that it would greatly increase the expanse of roof at the rear of the property. It would significantly add to the massing and, in doing so, it would alter and distort its proportions. As the proposal would be a uncomfortable rear projecting addition, it would not successfully integrate itself into the scale and appearance of the property.

9. The change would be marked from its exhibition cottage design and it would be of detriment to the character of the host premises, its inherent architectural character and the design value. That the fenestration would replicate the existing property would not address the unsympathetic design and massing concern. Accordingly, the proposal would lessen the property's contribution to the significance of the conservation area.

10. The appellant has pointed out that the proposal would be on the rear of the property which has already been the subject of extension. However, this belies the importance of the proportions of the appeal property to the significance of the conservation area. In any event, there would be likely some visibility of the proposal from the Meadway streetscene up to the Parkway road junction. This would be due to its scale and massing extending out from the existing rooflines. Hence, there would be a likely discernible and measurable detrimental impact from the streetscene.

11. The Council has also raised concerns over a lack of information on the significance of the heritage assets affected with regard to the onus that paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) puts on the applicant to provide such information. The appellant submitted a Heritage Statement with the appeal. I have considered the totality of the heritage evidence to enable me to come to the view that the proposal would detract from the significance of the conservation area.

12. The statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is of considerable weight and importance. Having regard to the above, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. This weighs significantly against the proposal.

13. For similar reasons, the proposal would not comply with Policies CP18, DC61 and DC68 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2008) where they are concerned with development that must preserve and enhance character and appearance, respond to local building forms and the character of the area, and that permission will only be granted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and is well designed, amongst other considerations.

14. It would also not comply with the Heritage SPD with the protection that it affords conservation areas, including that extensions should be subordinate to the mass and height of the main building, and with the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2011) where it concerns the contribution of design to a character unique to that period of development.

15. For the purposes of paragraph 202 of the Framework, 'less than substantial harm' would arise to the significance of a designated heritage asset. This harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

16. In this regard, the proposal would increase the quality and provision of internal space for a family home. Whilst a largely personal benefit, it attracts some support under the Framework in providing housing for different groups, including families. Issues in relation to not unacceptable effects on the living conditions of the neighbours, including funnelling, light and privacy, are neutral matters. I am also mindful that the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The public benefits would not outweigh the 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage asset. It would not comply with the Framework in this regard.

Other Matters

17. The Council considers that the appeal property forms a heritage asset in its own right because of its origins as an exhibition cottage. The heritage advice that the Council sought during the planning application considered the appeal property to be a non-designated heritage asset with regard to the Framework. The appellant's appeal statement also refers to the host building by way of a locally listed designation.

18. The Framework defines a heritage asset as including designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). The Heritage SPD includes a list of buildings of local heritage interest and the Character Appraisal identifies locally listed buildings in this conservation area. The appeal property does not appear in either as such a building.

19. Based on the information before me, the appeal property does not appear to constitute a non-designated heritage asset. The Character Appraisal rightly identifies the building as making a positive contribution to the area, but this does not amount to a local listing.

20. That being said, it makes little difference to my decision because of the statutory protection that is afforded to the conservation area and the contribution that the appeal property makes to its significance. The proposal fails on this count for the reasons that I have set out above.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all matters that have been raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Hendley

INSPECTOR