
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 10 August 2021

by Luke Simpson BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/20/3264860

16 Beccles Drive, Barking IG11 9HX

- 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 Plungiene against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 20/01374/FULL, dated 3 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed new two storey, two bedroom end of terrace house'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 20 July 2021 the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Accordingly, both parties were invited to provide representations in relation to the revised Framework. I have therefore had regard to the revised Framework in considering this appeal.
3. Reference is made in the Council's reason for refusal to the policies in the London Plan (March 2016). Since the appeal application was decided, the latest version of the London Plan (2021) has been published and is now part of the development plan for London. The appellant and the Council were invited to provide further representations to the new London Plan Policies. However, no responses were received. In this case, I conclude that I can rely on the relevant policies contained within the Borough Wide Development Policies Development Management Document 2011 (DPD). This is because, in relation to the main issues of this appeal, these policies are consistent with the more general policies contained within the London Plan.
4. Reference is also made to the Draft Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation Version 2020 (DLP), but since this is at an early stage as an emerging development plan, I can afford it little weight.
5. The Government published the Housing Delivery Test: 2020 Measurement (HDT) on 19 January 2021. These figures show that, over the preceding three-year period, 57% of the Council's housing requirement was delivered. National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) footnote 8, explains that in such circumstances, paragraph 11d of the Framework is engaged. I have considered the appeal on this basis and shall return to this matter below.

6. The Council has provided evidence to demonstrate that they can currently demonstrate a deliverable supply of 5.7 years of land for housing. There is no evidence before me to the contrary and as such, I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area.

Reasons

8. The proposed development would be located on land to the side of 16 Beccles Drive, which is a two-storey semi-detached residential property located on a corner plot. The land currently comprises part of the existing garden and an existing garage. The surrounding area is known as the Leftley Estate, which the Council suggests was developed in the 1930's. The Leftley Estate is not a conservation area but nonetheless it has a clear and distinctive identity.
9. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by two-storey terraced and semi-detached residential development. Corner plots are typically occupied by pairs of semi-detached dwellings set within more spacious plots, with gaps providing a transition between them and neighbouring terraced properties. In this regard, the Leftley Estate comprises a largely consistent layout and pattern of development.
10. The proposed development would significantly erode the existing gap between No 16 and the neighbouring property at No 18 Beccles Drive (No 18). This would result in a harmful visual impact because the existing gap provides an important visual break between these properties. A small gap would remain between No 16 and No 18 but this would not be sufficient to overcome the harm caused.
11. The attached neighbouring dwelling includes a two-storey side extension. However, this extension is flush with the front elevation of the semi-detached dwellings and a larger gap is retained between this property and the adjacent neighbouring dwelling. In contrast, the proposed development would dominate the corner plot. It would also be set back from the existing front elevation and orientated awkwardly to accommodate the curved layout of the plot. As such, it would appear as a cramped and incongruous feature of the street scene. In this regard it would jar with the existing character of the surrounding Leftley Estate. The lower ridge height of the development would be out of character with the existing scale of residential development and would therefore serve to exacerbate the incongruous appearance.
12. I accept that there are some examples of properties which incorporate two-storey side extensions, some of which follow the curving line of the street layout, such as 23 Beccles Drive nearby. However, the precise circumstances in which these developments were granted permission, if at all, are not before me. In addition, these examples are sporadic. Generally, properties on corner plots in the surrounding area have not been extended to the extent which is currently proposed. For these reasons, this consideration does not provide a justification for the harm which the development would cause in this instance.
13. The appellant outlines that No. 16 has already been extended, incorporating a loft conversion which changed the previously hipped roof form to a gable roof

form. Although this does result in a reduction in the symmetry of the pair of dwellings, the proposed development would be materially more harmful than the existing extensions. For the same reason, the fact that the proposed development would partially screen the existing extensions would not offset the harm which the development would cause.

14. The proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would conflict with DPD Policies BP8 and BP11, which seek in part to ensure that development proposals have a high standard of design, having regard to the local character of the area.
15. In terms of emerging policies, the proposal would also be contrary to emerging DLP policies SP4 and DM11, which in part require new development to be of a high-quality design and make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area. However, these policies can be given little weight, given their early status in the plan-making process.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

16. Given that there are no relevant Framework policies which direct refusal within the terms of Framework paragraph 11d(i), Paragraph 11d(ii) is engaged. As such, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
17. I have already identified the adverse impacts of the development with regard to the harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. DPD Policies BP8 and BP11 can be afforded substantial weight, even in the context of the HDT. This is because residential development in the Borough is capable of according with these policies without there being a significant constraining effect on the supply of housing. Furthermore, the aims of these policies are consistent with Framework paragraph 130, which states in part that planning policies should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character.
18. In terms of benefits, the development would provide a net increase of one dwelling. This would provide some limited social and economic benefits in terms of helping to meet local housing needs but also supporting the local economy. I have had regard to the results of the HDT in considering these benefits. Nevertheless, one dwelling would have a very limited impact on housing supply and delivery and thus I have only given these benefits moderate weight.
19. There would also be social and economic benefits associated with the construction of the development. Albeit these would be temporary. This would be consistent with the aims of the social and economic objectives set out at Framework paragraph 8. As such, I attribute moderate weight to these benefits.
20. The appellant also suggests that the proposed development would provide a small family dwelling which would reduce the need for high rise developments elsewhere. However, the appellant has not provided any evidence to demonstrate that there is a specific need for smaller family dwellings in the Borough. As such, the provision of a smaller dwelling has a neutral effect, rather than a beneficial effect.

21. In summary, the proposed development would result in significant harm with regard to the adverse visual impact upon the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area. The adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the framework as a whole.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no other material considerations which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Luke Simpson

INSPECTOR