

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2021

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31ST December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/21/3283302

8 Hainault Grove, Chigwell IG7 5DJ

- 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 B Mendel with Mr & Mrs Phillips against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application, Ref. PL/EPF/1251/21, dated 30 April 2021 was refused by notice dated 29 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation including new windows, skylights and renewable energy services. Extension to existing garage and widening of door opening.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene, and (ii) the effect on the District's mix of housing accommodation.

Reasons

3. On the first issue, I saw on my visit that whereas Hainault Road has a linear development pattern with two storey houses of individual appearance to each side, the cul-de-sac of Hainault Grove comprises a substantial contrast in the street scene. This is because of the first two dwellings on either side of the cul-de-sac are essentially single storey profile with open plan and front and side gardens which provide the junction with its open and spacious appearance. They also signify the different character of all the dwellings in Hainault Grove compared to that of Hainault Road.
 4. Particularly pleasing is that the appeal dwelling and No. 1, its neighbour opposite, are a matching pair with the same original design and external materials. And whilst the rear extension granted permission in 1990 has resulted in the appeal dwelling being larger than the bungalow opposite, the modest size and discreet siting of the addition makes little difference to the symmetry of the pair.
 5. However, the appeal scheme would involve a significant change to No. 8 in the form of both a larger scale and different design. This would result in the building
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appearing incongruous in relation to the other bungalows that comprise this small and co-ordinated development.

6. Firstly, the change to the north elevation facing the Grove would be fairly minor but the alterations to the Hainault Road (west) elevation with the three dormers on the roof plane would give the dwelling a top-heavy appearance and unbalance the entrance when read with the bungalow opposite. This would undermine the objective of the original design concept for the cul-de-sac.
7. Secondly, the rear east elevation with its mansard roof and large window would be prominent in views from within the development and appear bulky and out of keeping with its neighbours. I acknowledge that there is some variety in the roof designs of the buildings, but by and large they retain a single storey / 1.5 storey profile. The first floor additions in the appeal scheme would be tantamount to a full 2 storey dwelling.
8. I have noted that the grounds of appeal provide examples of permissions granted for extensions to dwellings in the area. However, I consider that these do not have a direct bearing on the reasons for my decision, which as explained above are based on the particular circumstances of this case.
9. As regards the appellant's evaluation of the proposal against the Council's policies cited in the Notice of Refusal, I have carefully considered the points made but have found no reason to conclude other than that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area and that this would be contrary to local and national planning policy.
10. In this case the relevant policies comprise Policies CP2, DBE9 & DBE10 of the Epping Forest Local Plan 1998 & 2006; Policies DM9 & DM10 of the Local Plan Submission Version 2017 and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
11. Turning to the second main issue, because the dwelling would have two storeys, the Council says that the proposed development would result in the loss of a bungalow in conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy H1 (F) of the Submission Version of the Local Plan 2017.
12. I have noted that 'specialist accommodation' is to be retained in the design of the alterations and additions. This would be in the form of ground floor accommodation suitable for ambulant disabled use. However, the substantial increase in floorspace on the first floor would inevitably move the market position of the dwelling towards normal family accommodation and away from the more restricted and inexpensive specialist housing for the elderly or people with disabilities.
13. In this case the appellant wishes to accommodate an elderly parent who would be able to make use of the ground floor. But in the long term when the property changes hands, there is no guarantee that such an arrangement would continue. However, even if I had been minded to accept the appellant's case on this point and recognise the particular family circumstances, my conclusion on the first issue precludes this option.

14. For the reasons explained and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR