

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2022

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W1905/D/22/3292746

Bouquet, Baas Hill, Broxbourne, EN10 7EP

- 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 Naomi Hoffman against the decision of Broxbourne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 07/21/1391/HF, dated 25 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as '*Enlargement of the house by the addition of an extra storey over the majority of this existing bungalow*'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and upon the living conditions at Rosewood (formerly Driftwood), with particular regard to visual impact and daylight.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is one of three detached bungalows (Birchlea, Bouquet and Rosewood) which sit at the terminal end of a short stretch of a gated residential cul-de-sac road known as Norris Wood and which runs at right angles from Baas Hill. Birchlea and Bouquet continue a straight row of four other properties (Nos 1-4) that line the east side of the narrow access road. Rosewood is orientated at 90 degrees to these and faces looking back along Norris Wood towards Baas Hill.
4. Bouquet has an 'L-shaped' footprint with a front facing gable and a long side elevation sitting close to the common boundary with Rosewood where along this stretch it encloses a large proportion of the south side of that property's rear garden, demarcated by an approximate 1.8m high timber fence. In common with Birchlea and Rosewood, the appeal property has a low profile with a very shallow pitched roof and all three stand in stark contrast to Nos 1-4 which are two-storey detached houses of more contemporary and imposing design. The proposal would add a storey to Bouquet by raising the eaves levels

on three sides to full two-storey height with the exception of the north side elevation facing Rosewood, which would incorporate a cat-slide roof to the remodelled form of the building, thereby retaining its single-storey eaves level.

Character and Appearance

5. Although not identical, the bungalows share common features, not least their low-rise form and fairly muted visual presence. Nos 1-4 Norris Wood equally share common features between them, being similar versions of each other and laid out in a fairly regimented fashion. Whilst there is a clearly defined and obvious shift in style between Nos 1-4 and the three bungalows that sit as a group at the end of the cul-de-sac, the step change between No 4 and Birchlea appears as a comfortable transition where a cohesive group of one property type gives way for another. Bouquet sits in the middle of the group of bungalows and is an integral part of it.
6. Raising the height of Bouquet by a full storey would markedly alter the form and profile of the dwelling. In my assessment it would rise above Birchlea and Rosewood in a jarring fashion. Its two-storey presence would be at significant odds with the adjoining low-rise character of its two immediately adjoining and closely associated neighbours. At the same time, it would show no correlation with the design approach of Nos 1-4, with a catslide roof that would be uncharacteristic of nearby building styles, and a truncated roof profile that would appear noticeably out of balance and proportion with the scale and height of the dwelling's walls, typified especially by the front elevation and the south side elevation which would both be open to clear view from Norris Wood.
7. My overall impression is that the remodelled form of Bouquet would stand out as a prominent and incongruous building amongst its contemporaries. This would be to the detriment of the area's character and appearance and contrary to Policies DSC1 and DSC2 of the Broxbourne Local Plan June 2020 (LP) insofar as they require development, including extensions and alterations to dwellings, to display a high standard of design that respects the character and design of the existing building and enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

Living Conditions at Rosewood

8. Rosewood and Bouquet share a very close relationship that is atypical for many neighbouring properties. The private garden space to Rosewood is largely enclosed to one side by the flank elevation of Bouquet. These two properties are able to sit in such close harmony with one another due to their low-profile. This is exemplified by the fact that the eaves height to Bouquet sits only just a small distance above the fence line which runs along the common boundary between both properties, and that the roof slopes away from the boundary at a very shallow angle.
9. I recognise the efforts made by the appellant to reduce any impact upon the adjoining property's amenities by incorporating a catslide roof, and that the eaves height adjacent to Rosewood would not change. However, the angle of the roof pitch would noticeably increase, as would the overall height and mass of the building's north side elevation. The altered form of Bouquet would present itself to the rear garden of Rosewood as a large bulk of building, mostly in the form of an unrelieved roofscape at fairly close quarters. I am not

persuaded by any substantive evidence that levels of natural light to Rosewood would be materially affected. Nevertheless, my overall view is that the proposal would be visually intrusive and overbearing, creating an uncharacteristically strong sense of enclosure to the setting of the private garden. This would be openly perceived in the outlook from east facing windows to Rosewood, as well as from the garden space, and would be harmful to the neighbours' living conditions. In this regard the proposal would further fail to display the quality of design required by LP Policy DSC1 and would also conflict with LP Policy EQ1 which requires all development within the urban area to avoid detrimental impacts upon the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers.

Other Matters

10. I appreciate that the appellant sought pre-application advice from the Council which informed their approach to the application and that, as a result, they feel particularly aggrieved by the decision. However, this does not alter my consideration of the appeal, which has been determined having regard to the planning merits of the case.
11. The appellant's family requirements for additional living space are noted but this need does not outweigh the harms that I have identified.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and to the living conditions at Rosewood. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR