

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2022

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/22/3302590

14 Crossways, Romford RM2 6AL

- 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 Mark Breden (Spaces Architectural) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0244.22, dated 17 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is 'extensions/new garage and alterations to house in form of new windows and rendering as well as boundary treatments'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the extensions and alterations to house in form of new windows and rendering, but is allowed insofar as it relates to the new garage and boundary treatments. Accordingly, planning permission is granted for new garage and boundary treatments at 14 Crossways, Romford RM2 6AL. The permission is granted in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P0244.22, dated 17 February 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) Development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, so far as relevant to the new garage and boundary treatments hereby permitted: BC-1 (block plan and site location plan) and CU-02 (plan and elevations).
 - 3) The proposed development hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with the materials detailed under the Materials Section of the application form unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether each of the individual elements of the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area, in which the appeal property is located.

Reasons

3. The conservation area comprises a large part of the residential suburb known as Gidea Park, with the estate established by the 1910/11 and 1934 Gidea Park Exhibition houses. No 14 Crossways is a semi-detached two storey dwelling which due to the date of its construction did not form part of the exhibitions. It does, however, retain much of its original built form and detailing, reflecting the garden suburb character of the area. As such, it makes a positive contribution to the wider character of the conservation area.
4. The rear extension would be of limited depth and its overall form would respect the proportions of the original dwelling. Moreover, there is a similar extension in place at the adjoining dwelling. However, the ground floor elevation currently includes a single door with windows to either side, which would be replaced with a pair of separate doors. This change would not reflect the character and appearance of the original property as the paired doors would be an incongruous design feature in comparison to the traditional form of door currently in place.
5. The existing detached outbuilding to the side of the property is just under half its depth and, therefore, appears subservient. It is in a particularly prominent location due to the low boundary treatment and area of public open space next to the dwelling. The proposed replacement outbuilding would have a slightly lower roof profile than the existing building, but would be materially larger due to its overall depth being similar to that of No 14. Consequently, it would not appear subservient to the dwelling and its overall size would detract from views of the dwelling on this prominent corner location.
6. The garage would be located at the end of the garden where there is an existing area of hardstanding used for parking and, as the appellant contends, where a detached garage formerly stood. As such, the garage would not be in an uncharacteristic location in terms of the previous use and would be seen in profile against the much larger side elevation of the adjacent dwelling. Consequently, it would not be a prominent or incongruous feature in this location and with appropriate design and external materials it would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. I agree with the Council that the low level hedge and short section of fencing to the side and rear garden boundaries respectively would not be harmful as these are existing features of the wider area.
7. The appeal property includes original windows to the front and side, with those to the front bay being particularly prominent. While a picture of the intended replacement windows has been provided, there is insufficient detail from this and the application form to appreciate fully the effects of the changes proposed. In particular, it is unclear what materials would be used and whether the design and nature of the frames and glazing would preserve the appearance of the property compared to the original windows currently in situ.
8. I note that the appellant suggests a condition that would require submission and approval of the window details. The Council also suggests such a condition should the appeal succeed. However, while I note the appellant's concerns

about the costs of providing the relevant details, I am mindful in this regard of the statutory requirement that in exercising planning functions in conservation areas special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area¹. In the absence of sufficient details at this stage to enable this statutory requirement to be undertaken, it would not be appropriate to defer the consideration of this matter to a later stage following a grant of permission. Consequently, I must find as the Council did that the replacement windows would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

9. Therefore, for the above reasons, I find that the rear extension, replacement outbuilding and windows fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area. The garage and boundary treatments would, however, preserve its character and appearance. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation². Based on the above findings, I consider the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
10. Under such circumstances, the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal³. Therefore, I have had regard to the benefits put forward by the appellant, which relate to thermal efficiency of the replacement windows and the additional security provided by the larger outbuilding and rear doors. However, with regard to the windows I have found that there is insufficient information to assess the benefits against the effects on the conservation area; and the outbuilding is not the only means of improving security at the property. Therefore, these matters are insufficient to outweigh the harm to the conservation area that would occur.
11. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the rear extension, replacement outbuilding and windows would not preserve the character and appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area. Consequently, these elements of the overall proposal are contrary to Policy HC1 of The London Plan 2021 and Policy 28 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031 (2021), which concern the effects of development on heritage assets; and to Policy 26 of the Local Plan, which includes the requirement for high architectural quality and design. However, the garage and boundary treatments would preserve the area's character and appearance and, therefore, there is no conflict with these development plan policies.

Other Matters

12. The appellant raises a number of matters about engagement with the Council before and during the application process. However, these matters do not have a direct bearing on this appeal, which is concerned with the planning merits of the proposal.

¹ Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

² Paragraph 199.

³ Paragraph 202.

Conclusion and Conditions

13. As the new garage and boundary treatments are independent of and physically separate from the other elements of the proposal, it is possible in this case to make a split decision with regard to the different elements. Therefore, for the above reasons, the appeal succeeds in respect of the new garage and boundary treatments, but fails in respect of the extensions and alterations to the house in form of new windows and rendering.
14. Of the Council's suggested conditions I have imposed the standard time condition and, to ensure the proper implementation of the approved elements, one requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the relevant parts of the approved plans. I agree also that a condition is necessary to ensure that the materials used for the approved elements should reflect the application as a whole, in the interests of the character and appearance of the appeal property and wider area.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR