



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2023

by David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15/03/2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/22/3306750

127 Chase Cross Road, Romford RM5 3YS

- 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 Jana Chetraru against the decision of London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1087.22, dated 1 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side extension to form 2 x two storey, 4-bed, semi detached dwellings with habitable roof space with velux lights to rear, with associated parking, amenity space, and landscaped gardens involving demolition of rear garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have taken the description of the development from the Council's decision notice and the appeal form as these accurately represent the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the:
 - Character and appearance of the area;
 - Living conditions of future residents with regards to internal space; and
 - Parking and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site consists of a detached dwelling in a suburban area characterised by 1 and 2-storey dwellings. Although the proposal is described as a side extension, it would involve significant changes to the design of the host property.
5. The site is located adjacent to the junction between Chase Cross Road and Ascension Road. Although Ascension Road contains a mixture of designs of dwelling, the building line is relatively strong with the dwellings set back from the highway behind front gardens. The appeal site reflects this building line due to the dwelling being set back from the side boundary. This also reflects the

layout of the building on the opposite side of the junction, which contributes to the character of the streetscape around the junction and along Ascension Road.

6. The proposal would result in the side wall of the extension being located very close to the side boundary. This would project forward of the established building line of Ascension Road, and would result in a gable wall of an overdominant and stark appearance facing onto the streetscape. The proposal would also have an enclosing effect on the open character of the junction, and would contrast uncomfortably with the design and arrangement of the dwelling on the opposite side of Ascension Road. The use of a partial hip for the roof would do little to mitigate the obtrusive appearance of the proposal.
7. The appellant refers to similar developments in the area. However, the building adjacent to Felstead Road served to confirm the harm that can arise from the obtrusive and over-prominent appearance of gable walls located close to the boundary with the streetscape and projecting beyond the building line. The design of the proposal does reflect some elements of other buildings in the area, such as the roof of the dwelling at No 1A Faircross Road, but this is of a different layout to the appeal site.
8. Moreover, the buildings referred to do not create a prevailing context for the scale and design of the proposed gable wall located close to the side boundary and facing directly onto the streetscape. It has also not been demonstrated that the circumstances of those other sites are a direct parallel to the appeal before me in terms of site layout, the history of the site, established building lines and the planning policies in place at the time. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.
9. I conclude that due to its scale, design and location that the proposal would lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the design requirements of Policies 26 of the Havering Local Plan 2021 and D4 of the London Plan 2021. The proposal would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in respect of achieving well-designed places.
10. The appellant refers to the National Design Guide (the NDG), and that well-designed places do not need to copy their surroundings in every way. However, given my conclusions in respect of character and appearance, the proposal would fail to meet the aims of the NDG in respect of the consideration of good design.

Living Conditions

11. The submitted plans indicate that a bedroom in each of the properties would not meet the minimum space standards for a one bedspace single bedroom. The appellant submits that the bedroom layout can be adjusted to achieve the required standards, but has not provided substantive evidence to demonstrate if this is feasible without affecting other rooms in respect of the required space standards.
12. I therefore conclude that it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would meet the appropriate standards for the provision of internal living space, to the detriment of the living conditions of future residents. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies 7 of the Local Plan and D6 of the London Plan in respect of amenity, housing quality and standards.

Parking and Highway Safety

13. The appeal proposal would provide 2 parking spaces for each dwelling, which exceeds the maximum of 1 parking space per dwelling as set out in development plan policy. However, the existing dwelling already exceeds this amount of parking provision. In any event, the number of proposed parking spaces could be reduced by planning condition. Subject to such a condition, the proposal would not conflict with planning policy and this therefore does not represent a reason to withhold permission.
14. With regards to highway safety, the Council refers to the heights of boundary walls as depicted on the submitted plans and documents, which it considers would affect visibility for vehicles. However, the proposed access to the parking to the front of the dwellings would appear to be no nearer the junction than the existing site access, and the height of any boundary treatment could be addressed by condition.
15. Access to a parking space to the rear of the site would use an existing vehicle crossover. This access would not appear to provide suitable visibility for vehicles egressing the site. However, the rear parking space could be removed in response to the reduction in the number of parking spaces, thereby addressing the matter of inadequate visibility.
16. Subject to appropriate planning conditions, I conclude that the proposal would not lead to harm in respect of parking provision or highway safety. On that basis, the proposal would not conflict with Policies 23 and 24 of the Local Plan and T4 and T6 of the London Plan in respect of parking standards and highway safety.

Other Matters

17. I am mindful that no objections to the proposal were received from residents of the surrounding area. However, a lack of objection does not mean that there is a lack of harm, and this does not lead me to a different conclusion based on my own observations.
18. The Council refers to a degree of uncertainty in respect of its housing land supply, and has assessed the proposal on the basis of the 'tilted balance' of paragraph 11(d) of the Framework with regards to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, even having regard to the Council's housing land supply, the provision of a single further dwelling would be no more than a limited benefit.

Conclusion

19. Notwithstanding my conclusions in respect of parking and highway safety, the proposal would lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and it has not been demonstrated that the dwelling would provide suitable living conditions for residents.
20. The adverse impacts I have identified would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, including in respect of housing land supply, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, including with

regards to achieving well-designed places and ensuring a high standard of amenity for future residents.

21. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross

INSPECTOR