The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023

by L Reid BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/23/3324322
14 Longwood Gardens, Ilford IG5 0BA

- 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 Harunur Rashid against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
- The application 0469/23, dated 2 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2023.
- The development proposed is single / double storey extension to the rear of the property.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single and part two storey rear/side extensions, new pitched roof over single storey front side bay window. Alterations to fenestrations at 14 Longwood Gardens, Ilford IG5 0BA in accordance with the terms of the application ref, 0469/23, dated 2 February 2023, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Plan, 02 – Proposed Plans, Elevations and Section.

    3) The external finishing materials of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the construction of the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the planning application form. It is different to that on the decision notice and no confirmation has been provided that the change to the wording of the description was agreed by both parties. However, it is inaccurate as it does not refer to the side extension or pitched roof over the front bay window which are shown on the submitted plans. I have therefore used the Council's description in my decision.

3. At my site visit I saw that the rear elevation of the house was different to that shown on the existing floor plans and elevations. I have determined the appeal based on my observations of the site and the submitted proposed floor plans and elevations for which the Council refused planning permission. The Council have not raised any issues with the ground floor extension, and I have no reason to reach a contrary view on this element of the proposal. My decision is therefore focused on the first floor element of the extension.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a 1930's style semi-detached house located in a residential area. On the front elevation, the painted brickwork and detailing on the bay projection and front gable give the house a distinctive character and appearance. At the rear, the house has less architectural merit. The surrounding area is characterised by semi-detached houses of varying styles and designs, some of which have been altered and extended.

6. The Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document (2019) (the SPD) contains guidance for first floor extensions, including advice that they should generally be kept to a maximum of 3m depth and no more than half the width of the rear elevation. Such supplementary planning documents provide helpful guidance as to what may be considered good design; however, this must be considered alongside the individual circumstances of the site and proposal. The SPD recognises that each development should be considered on its merits on the basis that each property is different, and ultimately seeks to ensure extensions are proportionate and subordinate to the host property.

7. Whilst the depth and width of the first floor extension would exceed guidance, the house sits within a relatively spacious plot and as a result, the extension would not appear as overly large, relative to the overall plot size. In comparison to the existing size of the first floor, the size of the extension would represent an acceptable increase. There would also remain an appreciable set-in from the side boundary with the adjoining semi-detached property, reducing the extension's overall massing.

8. I accept that the main roofscape is predominately hipped, however, the gable roof of the first floor extension would be in keeping with the front gable and would therefore match the roof design of the house. This would comply with the guidance in the SPD for rear extensions. The eaves of the roof would be no higher than the existing and as the height of the roof would be set down, this would allow for the main hipped roof to remain legible. The extension would add some bulk to the rear of the house, however, I find that that it would not be disproportionate or insubordinate to the house overall, something the guidance in the SPD seeks to avoid.

9. The extension would not be particularly prominent or visible from the public domain due to its rear siting and the relatively narrow gaps between properties. The overall scale and proportions of the extension, together with the use of matching materials and fenestration would ensure the development would be in keeping with the varied character of the area.

10. I therefore conclude that the size, scale, massing, height, design and materials of the proposal would be sympathetic and would respect the local character. It would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property or the surrounding area and would therefore comply with Policies LP26 and LP30 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018). When taken together, amongst other things, these policies require residential extensions to be well integrated and to respect the surrounding area.

Other Matters

11. The Council takes issue with the pitched roof over the front bay window. However, this is not referenced in the reason for refusal. From my site visit, I am content that this would not cause harm, given the size of the roof and that several houses in the street have similar roofs over the ground floor bay window.

12. The Council confirmed in the officer's report, that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, however then stated in the conclusion that the proposal would have an overbearing effect on the occupants of No. 12 Longwood Gardens. There is no mention of this in the reason for refusal. The officer report is contradictory, and the Council's position is not clear. The extension would extend past the rear of No. 12 with the single storey element inset from the shared boundary. Whilst the first floor extension would be built close to the boundary, given its overall depth and scale, and in the absence of evidence, it is my view that the proposal would not have an overbearing effect on the occupants of No.12 to a degree that would be harmful to their living conditions.

Conditions

13. I have imposed the statutory implementation condition, along with a condition listing the approved plans to provide certainty. A materials condition is also necessary to ensure the external materials of the proposal match the existing materials to protect the appearance of the host property and the area.

Conclusion

14. I have found that the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property or the surrounding area. The proposal complies with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L Reid

INSPECTOR