



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 October 2024

by M Ollerenshaw BSc (Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/24/3340034

83 Crossways, Romford, Havering RM2 6AS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Kamal Farma against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref is P0826.23.
 - The development proposed is renewal of 18 windows and 1 rear patio door from single glaze wood sash to double glaze PVC-U wood effect sash, repainting of exterior and the trimming back of an overhanging Horse Chestnut tree by 30% - 40%.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. In the interests of conciseness, the description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the decision notice, rather than the lengthy one given on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including the effect on an existing tree, and whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gidea Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a two storey semi-detached dwelling located on Crossways within an established residential area. The site is within the Gidea Park Conservation Area (CA) which is covered by an Article 4(2) Direction.
5. The significance of the CA is derived from its development as an early twentieth century garden suburb featuring Exhibition Houses of various designs and high architectural quality. Properties on Crossways are generally set behind hedges or low walls on generously sized plots with mature trees in their gardens and those lining the road giving a spacious, verdant character.
6. Along with the attached property, 85 Crossways, and the adjoining semi-detached pair at 79 and 81 Crossways, the property forms part of a small group of similar arts and crafts style dwellings with vernacular details and traditional materials, including sliding sash windows, which reflect the garden suburb character of the CA. Based on the evidence before me and my

observations on the site, I agree with the CA character appraisal categorisation of the property as making a positive contribution to the area.

7. The appeal scheme includes the replacement of eighteen existing single glazed sliding sash windows with double glazed uPVC wood effect sash windows, together with replacement of a rear patio door, repainting of the exterior of the house in white, and pruning works to a tree in the garden. The Council has raised no concerns over the proposed repainting of the house, and I have no reason to disagree with that assessment based on the evidence before me.
8. Due to their traditional design and appearance, including the painted timber finish, the existing windows positively contribute to the architectural interest of the property and the character of the CA. Therefore, the loss of this historic fabric should be robustly justified. During my site visit I saw that while some of the windows were in relatively good order, others were in a poor state of repair, with signs of decay to the frames, cracks in the glass, and evidence of damp and mould. However, no condition survey has been provided to show that the windows are beyond repair. In the absence of detailed justification, I am unable to conclude that total replacement of the windows is necessary.
9. The submitted details indicate that the new uPVC window frames would maintain the sliding sash design and be similar to the thickness of the existing frames. However, the surface texture of the wood effect finish would be unlikely to resemble the patina of the painted timber finish. The inclusion of certain design features, such as the inward opening tilt facility, applied glazing bars and spacer bars, means that the new windows would not reproduce the traditional craftsmanship of the existing windows. When open, the tilt function in particular would appear inauthentic and uncharacteristic of the property. Moreover, the double glazed units would be unlikely to replicate the reflective subtlety of the existing single glazing. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed windows would harm the historic integrity of the property and the significance of the CA. They are therefore unacceptable, even if the case for complete replacement of the existing windows had been demonstrated.
10. While some properties on Crossways have retained timber sash windows, I am aware that many have installed uPVC windows, including the examples referred to by the appellant. My attention has also been drawn to the replacement windows allowed on appeal at 10 Crossways. However, the precise details and planning history of these cases are not before me so I cannot be sure they are comparable to the appeal proposal. Moreover, I saw that some of the replacement windows in the surrounding area are not particularly sympathetic to the buildings or the CA. If anything, these examples reinforce my view that the proposed windows would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the property and the CA, and accord added importance to the need to preserve the historic integrity that remains.
11. The Horse Chestnut tree in the front garden is protected by reason of being within the CA. A mature and prominently sited specimen, it positively contributes to the verdant character of the street scene. While no detailed justification for pruning the tree has been provided, the works involve a modest reduction of overhanging branches. I could see that the tree had already been pruned, and these works have not been significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the site or the street scene. Thus, there is no

overriding conflict with the landscaping requirements of Policy 27 of the Havering Local Plan (2016-2031) (Local Plan).

12. Notwithstanding this, I conclude that the proposed replacement of the existing windows would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the area, and it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. The proposed development therefore conflicts with Local Plan Policies 26 and 28 and Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021). Amongst other matters, these policies promote high quality design and seek to and preserve and enhance heritage assets.
13. Given the localised effect of the proposal, the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial. This harm still however carries great weight. The less than substantial harm should be balanced against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use, in accordance with paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
14. The proposed windows and door would improve the insulation of the property and its resistance to damp, which is a potential health issue for the occupiers. They would also provide added security and reduced fire risk, and require less maintenance. However, these are largely private benefits to the occupiers. Reduced energy consumption is a public benefit, though only limited positive weight can be attributed to this given the small scale of the proposal. Moreover, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the appeal scheme is the only solution to achieving these benefits or that there are no less harmful alternatives. I conclude that the minor public benefits do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

15. The proposal does not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Ollerenshaw

INSPECTOR