



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2025

by **Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/25/3360528

57 Balgores Lane, Romford RM2 5JU

- 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 and Mrs Singh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application reference is P1442.24.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a first-floor side extension over the existing ground floor side extension with new entrance canopy and replacement windows/doors with brickwork repairs and lime mortar repointing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey detached house with a ground floor projection to one side. It falls within the Gidea Park Conservation Area (CA), which covers an extensive area. The CA derives its significance as a designated heritage asset primarily from the spacious layout of the estate that was originally planned as a Garden Suburb and the attractive mix of housing within it, which largely dates from the early 20th Century. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
4. Map 2 of the Gidea Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals (A&MP) identifies No 57 as one of the houses built for the 1910/11 Gidea Park Exhibition. The Council also refers to it as one of the '100 best houses' of the estate. With its tall, prominent chimneystacks, front gable, simple roof form, modest proportions and dark brick walls, the appeal dwelling has several distinctive features and an individual style. Although not listed, No 57 is an original Exhibition House. It has considerable historic, architectural and visual merit. As such, the appeal dwelling makes a significant and positive contribution to the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset, which is confirmed on Map 3 of the A&MP.
5. The proposal includes a first-floor extension over the existing ground floor side projection. A new canopy would also be introduced above the front entrance. Both

new additions would be set back from the main front walls and take advantage of the space available around the side of the existing building. The pattern of fenestration and external materials would both match the existing house.

6. Nevertheless, the proposal would result in a significantly larger property with extended 2-storey front elevation. By introducing additional built form in this way, the proposal would significantly alter the size, proportions and shape of the original dwelling. The new ridgeline and an additional expanse of front roof slope facing the road would accentuate the scale of the first-floor extension when seen from Balgores Lane. The visual impact of this new addition would be greater than the modest increase in volume and floor area to the host building might imply, given the prominence of the first-floor extension in the local street scene.
7. From various vantage points along Balgores Lane, the overall effect of the new first floor extension would be to reduce the primacy of the original building. The distinction between the Exhibition House and this later addition would blur. As a result, I share the Council's concern that the distinctive style of the original building and the presence of its key features such as the central chimneystack and front gable would be diluted with the new built form in place. The introduction of a new entrance canopy that would also be visible from the road would compound that impression. By loosening the historical ties of No 57 to the origin and early growth of the CA, these elements of the proposal would reduce the significance of this designated heritage asset, to its detriment.
8. I saw that the appeal dwelling is smaller than many houses along Balgores Lane, some of which include a first-floor wing set back from their main front wall. Nevertheless, most properties are of individual design, and it is unclear whether any have been extended and altered, as in the manner proposed. As such, I am unable to draw direct parallels between these cases and the proposal. In any event, each development should be assessed on its own merits. My own conclusion is that the proposed changes to No 57 would unduly compromise the form and general appearance of the original building and there would be an adverse impact on the character and qualities of the CA.
9. In reaching these findings, I agree that heritage assets must be allowed to evolve to reflect the changing needs and circumstances of users over time. The process of change is evident within the CA where I saw examples of alterations and additions to buildings that were evident from the road. In my experience, residential extensions in conservation areas can meet occupier requirements, add visual interest and protect the historic fabric. However, the Framework 2024 makes clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and that great weight should be given to their conservation, which I have done. It also states that development should add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character. As such, the balance of national policy is tipped against the appeal scheme.
10. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. It would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with Policies 7, 26 and 28 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031. These policies support high-quality, well-designed development that preserves, enhances or better reveals the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and responds to distinctive building forms. It would also fail to comply with the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document,

Heritage, which aims to ensure appropriate protection, enhancement and management of heritage assets by enabling sensitive responses.

Public benefits

11. Given the modest scale of the proposals relative to the size of the CA, the harm caused would be less than substantial. In those circumstances, the Framework 2024 states that such harm should be weighed against the public benefits. The loss of the crown roof to the existing side projection would improve the appearance of the dwelling, as would the replacement windows and doors, repairs to the brickwork and lime mortar repointing, as proposed.
12. The resultant living space would better suit the appellants' family needs with an additional bedroom, bathroom and an improved internal layout. I am sympathetic to this desire and acknowledge the problems posed by the restricted space within some of the rooms of the existing dwelling. While these benefits are largely private, a dwelling with good sized rooms that would meet the needs of a family would form a part of the wider housing supply. However, these public benefits do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

Other matters

13. An interested party raises additional concerns in relation to privacy, visual impact and precedent. These are important matters, and I have considered all the submitted evidence. However, given my finding on the main issue, these considerations have not been critical to my decision.

Conclusion

14. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations, including those of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
15. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR