Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 August 2016

by B Bowker  Mplan MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19 August 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/16/3149314
18 Martin Road, Dagenham, Barking and Dagenham RM8 2XH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Mehmet Osman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
- The application Ref 15/01510/OUT, dated 27 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2016.
- The development proposed is described as 'two storey side extension to form residential maisonettes'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The proposal is for outline planning permission with all matters reserved apart from access and scale. Appearance, landscaping and layout are reserved for later consideration and the appeal has been determined on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
   - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
   - Whether the proposal would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants, with particular regard to internal space and private amenity space; and,
   - The effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is a two storey end of terrace dwelling located at the corner of Martin Road and Bowes Road. Dwellings in the surrounding area are predominantly terraced and characterised by being set back from the road with an established building line. These factors create a pleasant spacious appearance. The side elevations of Nos 16 and 18 Martin Road are set away from the junction at Bowes Road which also contributes to the spacious appearance of the surrounding area.
5. The proposal’s two storey scale would be in keeping with surrounding properties. However, its location to the side of 18 Martin Road would reduce the spacious appearance of the surrounding area. The resultant loss of openness would be noticeable owing to the proposal’s location on a prominent corner plot. In particular, the loss of spaciousness would be seen from Bowes Road and a section of Martin Road to the front of the site. Similarly, when viewed alongside the open aspect to the side of 16 Martin Road, the proposal would be a conspicuous building in the context of the surrounding area.

6. Therefore I conclude the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policies BP8 and BP11 of the Borough Wide Development Plan Document (BWDP). Insofar as they relate to this matter, these policies require development to protect and enhance the local distinctiveness and character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions

7. Although outline permission is sought, the planning application form indicates that the proposal would comprise two residential flats each with two bedrooms. BWDP Policy BP5 requires 40 square metres of external amenity space per each two bedroom flat and the proposal would provide approximately 37 square metres for both flats. The appellant considers that this is a matter that could be assessed at the reserved matters stage. However, the shortfall of external amenity space in the context of Policy BP5 is significant. Therefore I am not convinced that this is a matter that could be resolved at the reserved matters stage owing to the limited size of the site.

8. I have not been provided with a copy of the Technical Housing Standards: Nationally Described Space Standards. Nonetheless, I have concerns that the proposal would be unable to provide adequate internal space at the reserved matters stage. The Council’s measurement of the building’s footprint is approximately 37 square metres. I also note that the proposal would be two storeys in height. In addition, as reasoned in the preceding paragraph, the proposal would also have a shortfall of external amenity space which would restrict any increase to the proposal’s footprint. Consequently, taken as a whole, the proposal would not be able to provide an acceptable level of internal and external amenity space necessary for the future occupants of two flats each with two bedrooms.

9. Therefore I conclude that the proposal would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants, with particular regard to internal space and private amenity space. Consequently the proposal is contrary to BWDP Policy BP5 and paragraph 17 bullet point 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Combined these policies seek to ensure future occupants of buildings are provided a good standard of amenity and adequate external amenity space.

Highway safety

10. Two vehicular parking spaces located to the front of the site are intended to serve occupants of both 18 Martin Road and the proposal. However, the Council’s Transport Development Management Team considers that owing to the geometry of the site and the proximity of the junction, the proposed
vehicular crossover is unacceptable on highway safety grounds. Consequently only one off-street parking space fronting the existing dwelling could realistically be provided to serve No 18 and the proposal. I am also aware that the site is located in an area which has a Public Transport Accessibility Level rating of two. As a result, it is likely that transport options for future occupants would be limited beyond the use of private vehicle.

11. During my mid-afternoon site visit I observed that the surrounding roads had some free parking spaces. In addition, I saw that the junction is subject to double yellow road markings which would prevent potentially unsafe parking. However, I acknowledge that parking availability would reduce in the early evening. That aside, I recognise paragraph 32 of the Framework which states that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. In this light, notwithstanding the Council’s concerns, I have no evidence before me to demonstrate that because of the provision of one parking space, on street parking would occur to an extent that would lead to severe residual cumulative impacts on highway grounds.

12. Therefore I conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on highway safety. Consequently the proposal meets the requirements of BWDP Policies BR9 and BR10 which seek to ensure development is served by adequate parking and does not have a harmful impact on the surrounding road network.

Other matters

13. I acknowledge that a number of modest benefits would arise from the proposal which includes its contribution to meeting housing need and support to construction employment. In addition, I have identified no harm to highway safety. However, these matters are outweighed by the proposal’s harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and to the living conditions of future occupants with regards the unacceptable provision of internal and external space.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and having taken all matters raised into account, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

B Bowker

INSPECTOR