
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2016

by Siobhan Watson BA(Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 10 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/16/3153495

12 High Street, Harefield, Hillingdon, UB9 6BU

- 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 Mr Mick Till (Lynview Homes) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 11022/APP/2015/4259, dated 18 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 7 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is the development of a three storey dwelling, demolition of existing single storey office.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:-

- (i) whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its effect on the adjacent Listed Building;
- (ii) whether the proposed development would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers in respect of outdoor amenity space and internal floorspace;
- (iii) the effect upon highway safety with particular regard to car parking; and
- (iv) whether the development would provide sufficient cycle parking.

Reasons

Conservation Area and Listed Building

3. The site is located within the Harefield Village Conservation Area which is characterised by its narrow shopping high-street with a dense building pattern of mainly 2 and 3-storey buildings of widely varying age and style. Buildings are commonly constructed of traditional materials such as brick and render.
 4. The existing building is a small single storey office of no particular architectural merit. It sits between two other buildings of contrasting age and style. Because the office building is of a very low height, a visual break between the two contrasting buildings on either side of it is maintained.
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5. The proposed dwelling would be of a radically different style to both buildings between which it would sit. Its full height windows, metal cladding, wide expanse of render, balcony and flat roof design would look architecturally incompatible with the 2 buildings on either side and would result in an incongruous addition to the street-scene.
6. Furthermore, No14, which the building would adjoin, is an early 18th Century Grade II Listed Building. The existing gap is important to the setting of this Listed Building. Adjoining further incompatible built development to it would diminish its stature and would spoil the way the building is visually experienced.
7. S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty upon me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. As the site is a small part of the conservation area the development would cause less than substantial harm to the special interest and significance of the conservation area. In these circumstances paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Apart from the addition to the housing supply, I have no real evidence of any other public benefits that would arise from the proposal. In consequence, I do not consider that there are public benefits sufficient to outweigh the harm I have found.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. It would also harm the setting of the Listed Building. Consequently, it would conflict with Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012) (LP); Policies BE4, BE10, BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Saved UDP Policies (November 2012) (UDP), and Policies 3.5 and 7.4 of the London Plan. In combination, these policies require that new development harmonises, complements or improves the character of an area; and conserves and enhances the historic landscape, including conservation areas and the settings of Listed Buildings.

Living Conditions

9. The proposed house would have a small first floor outdoor terrace of about 10 SqM and a small second floor balcony facing the road. Altogether, there would be a combined amenity area of about 14SqM. I appreciate the appellant's comments that there are nearby public outdoor spaces and that some people do not require a garden. However, the amenity space provided would be significantly short of the *Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) minimum guideline of 60 SqM. In my view, the proposed space would be too small to provide room for outdoor children's play, growing plants, drying clothes, garden storage and sitting out. These are all normal activities and requirements for occupiers of houses. Therefore, in my view, the lack of private amenity space would result in a dwelling which would not provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers.
10. The Council determined the appeal proposal on the basis of the Housing Standards Policy Transition Statement Implementation: October 2015. Since then the Housing Standards Minor Alterations to the London Plan, March 2016

(MALP) has been adopted. In so far as the proposed internal floor-space is concerned, there is no difference between the two documents. The MALP requires a 2 bedroom, 3-person dwelling to have a minimum gross internal area (GIA) of 70 SqM plus 2sqm of built in storage. The Council say that the proposed layout would provide approximately 60 SqM GIA with just 1.3sqm of storage space. However, the appellant says that the GIA would be some 83 SqM. Therefore, I have conflicting evidence before me and cannot reach a firm conclusion in respect of internal space. However, given that I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, there is no point in me pursuing this matter any further.

11. I conclude that the proposed development would not provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers in respect of outdoor amenity space. Consequently, the proposed development would conflict with UDP Policies BE19 and BE23, London Plan Policy 3.5 and the Council's SPD, which in combination, seek to ensure that new dwellings provide a satisfactory standard of residential amenity.

Highway Safety

12. UDP Policy AM14 seeks to ensure that development is in accordance with the Council's adopted car parking standards as set out in Annex 1. The standards are maximum levels and a 2 bedroom dwelling should have no more than 2 spaces. As no spaces would be provided, the proposal would comply with UDP Policy AM14. The explanation to the policy says that maximum levels are set in order to channel people onto the public transport system and help reduce congestion caused by car commuting.
13. I understand that the site is in an area with a low PTAL score of 1b so that public transport is fairly limited. However, although I observed at my visit that there is considerable demand for on street parking in the vicinity, I have no technical evidence that the proposal would be detrimental to highway or pedestrian safety and I am mindful that the existing office use has no onsite parking either. I consider that the parking demand arising from the change of use of the site from office to a small additional dwelling would have no material impact upon the level of on-street parking in this urban location. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not harm highway safety.

Cycle Parking

14. Annex 1 indicates that a minimum of 1 cycle space should be provided for a 2 bedroom dwelling. No cycle space is marked on the plans but the appellant has indicated that a space could either be put in the bin storage area or on the terrace. This is a matter that could have been dealt with a condition had I been allowing the appeal. Therefore, I consider that there would have been no conflict with UDP Policy AM7 which seeks to ensure adequate cycle space provision.

Conclusion

15. Although I find no harm to highway safety or in respect of cycle space provision, I do find that the proposed dwelling would not provide satisfactory living conditions; that it would harm the setting of the adjoining Listed Building; and it would fail to preserve or enhance the character and

appearance of the conservation area. The lack of harm in respect of cycle parking and highway safety does not overcome the harm I have identified.

16. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Siobhan Watson

INSPECTOR