
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2016

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/W/16/3150225

1 Goodwood Avenue, Hutton, Essex CM13 1QD

- 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 Dan Kearney against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/01609/FUL, dated 7 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing two storey dwelling and construction of a pair of semi-detached houses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. No 1 Goodwood Avenue is a two storey detached house set in a good sized plot on the corner of Rayleigh Road in a well established residential area. The proposal is to demolish the existing house and to replace it with a pair of semi-detached properties, one facing Rayleigh Road and the other with its main frontage facing Goodwood Avenue around the corner.
4. In relation to the main Rayleigh Road frontage, the pair of houses would be about the same height and only slightly narrower in width than the adjacent pair of semi-detached properties, Nos 276/278. The new houses would also respect the front building line of the adjacent properties. The elevation would be asymmetric with the corner of Goodwood Avenue marked by a gable feature and a ground floor bay window, but these would reflect features on adjacent houses and add visual interest to the corner rather than being over prominent.
5. The houses have also been designed to turn the corner into Goodwood Avenue with a second principal elevation having a slightly projecting gable feature above a central front door. In relation to this frontage the building would be set back about 2.4 m from the highway boundary, about half the distance compared to the current house on the site. This space would nevertheless allow most of the existing screening to be retained and/or replaced, softening the appearance of the proposal from this direction. Whilst the building would be set closer to the road than the properties further along, which are set back

about 5 m, these form a line of houses visually separated from the proposal by the rear garden of No 1 and a bend in the road. As such the appeal site is a distinctive corner plot and there is no need to adhere to the same building line as the houses further along the road.

6. However, the roof form of the two houses would be excessively bulky. In order to provide a fourth bedroom for each house within the roofspace, a square plan, flat topped roof with rooflights on each side is proposed. Contrary to the appellant's view, this would not read as a pitched roof as no ridgeline would be visible. The semi-detached houses nearby have traditional pitched, fully hipped roofs with clearly visible ridgelines and chimneys whilst the nearest houses in Goodwood Avenue are chalet bungalow style with dormer windows at first floor level and relatively low profile roofs, again with clear ridgelines.
7. In contrast to the roof form of these houses, the proposal would be seen to have a contrived roof shape to provide living accommodation at second floor level. The rooflights towards the top of each roof slope – four on the front and rear elevations, two on each side – would clearly indicate a flat roof behind and this would be readily apparent. The building would be exposed to view from a variety of angles due to its prominent corner position and the bend in Goodwood Avenue which increases its visibility in that road. There are no precedents for such a bulky roof form in the vicinity and consequently the building would appear incongruous and intrusive in the street scene.
8. Although not raised by the Council, I also share the concerns of neighbours regarding the impact of the proposed parking arrangements on the character of the area¹. At present the site is bounded by a low brick wall with tall shrubs and trees behind, which help to screen the existing house. Not one but two new access points would be created at the front and side of the site, crossing the highway verge and leading to the loss of sections of boundary screening. In addition, most if not all of the front garden areas would be hard surfaced to create parking spaces which would probably result in the loss of further vegetation. Although there are two trees within the highway verge, with little space for replacement planting on the Rayleigh Road frontage the current verdant nature of the corner site could be lost.
9. For these reasons the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area in conflict with Policy CP1 of the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan 2005. This requires development to be a high standard of design, compatible with its location and not have a detrimental impact on visual amenity.
10. The proposal would replace an unoccupied property in a poor state of repair and provide an additional house with social and economic benefits to the area. It is also recognised that improvements have been made compared to an earlier refused scheme. However, the concerns that have been identified above are sufficient to outweigh these advantages.
11. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

¹ The highway authority raise no objections in relation to highway safety.