
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 November 2016

by William Fieldhouse BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/16/3156323

King Harold, 51 Station Road, Harold Wood, Romford RM3 0BS

- 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 D Bearman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application ref P1062.15, dated 17 July 2015, was refused by notice dated 25 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is a raised roof extension to provide four additional flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. An amended layout plan was submitted with the appeal; this reduces the number of bedrooms in two of the flats from two to one, and amends the layout of another flat to ensure that a double bed could be accommodated¹. There would be no alteration to the exterior of the proposal, the number of dwellings would be unchanged, and there would be a slight reduction in the total number of bedrooms. On this basis, I am satisfied that the revised plan does not significantly alter the proposal and that no person's interests would be prejudiced if I accepted it. I will, therefore, determine the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether satisfactory living conditions would be created for future occupants.

Reasons

The Site, its Surroundings, and the Proposal

4. The appeal relates to a substantial detached public house located on the corner of Station Road and Arundel Road in a mixed use area. The main part of the building has a T-shaped footprint, two storeys with painted render walls, a pitched roof covered in tiles, prominent chimneys, and a distinctive front central gable. There are single-storey flat roofed projections to either side and to the rear; the scale of these and the fact that their walls are covered with matching

¹ Revised plan ref 12-286-02-D

painted render mean that they appear subservient to the main building which therefore exhibits an essentially symmetrical form. The public house dates back to the late 19th century and, whilst not identified formally as a heritage asset, it is of some local historic interest and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

5. To one side of the site is a row of three-storey buildings along Station Road that gradually step up the rising ground. On the other side of Arundel Road is a mid 20th century flat-roofed library building of modest height, and to the rear two-storey suburban houses. On the opposite side of Station Road is mainly open land associated with Harold Wood railway station.
6. At present there are two self-contained flats above the public house. The proposal would entail several extensions over the existing single-storey projections and raising the existing main roof by 0.6 metres to create a new crown roof form with modest, pitched-roofed dormer windows. The newly created first and second floors would accommodate a total of six flats: 3 one-bedroom; 2 two-bedroom; and 1 three-bedroom (based on the revised plans submitted with the appeal).

Character and Appearance

7. The proposal has clearly been designed with the intention of reflecting the architectural style and materials of the main part of the existing building and retaining distinctive features including the front gable and chimneys. However, the scale of the upper floor extensions to both sides and to the rear, and the raising of the eaves and roof, would result in a much larger and bulkier structure. The original proportions and essentially symmetrical form of the main building would be lost, and the bulk of the roof and the large side extensions, despite being set back, would detract from the existing principal elevation and front gable feature. The height and scale of the new building would mean that it would appear unduly dominant and intrusive in the street scene when viewed from Station Road and lower down the hill to the north east, including from Arundel Road and Queens Park Road.
8. The appellant advises that the proposed vertical tiling around the perimeter of the roof is intended to provide relief. However, I share the concerns of the Council that this would be quite out of character with the existing building, and further add to the harm that would be caused. I am not persuaded that replacing this with some other facing material would result in a satisfactory appearance, and indeed simply using matching painted render may in fact serve to reinforce the loss of the main building's existing proportions caused by the raising of the eaves.
9. I conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to national policy² and policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2008) ("DPD") which collectively seek to ensure high quality design such that development responds to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development and respects the scale, massing and height of the surrounding

² National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") section 7.

physical context and complements or improves the amenity and character of the area.

Living Conditions

10. The appellant advises that the revised plans submitted at the appeal stage mean that the sizes of all of the flats and each of the bedrooms would meet the requirements of the London Plan and the national Technical Standards, and this has not been disputed by the Council. However, it is not clear from the information before me whether the three second floor flats, which would be contained in the roof space, would meet the expectation that at least 75% of the gross internal area of a dwelling should have a minimum ceiling height of 2.5 metres³.
11. In order to provide opportunities for recreation and leisure and to enhance quality of life through improved health, reduced stress levels and child development, Council guidance seeks to ensure that every new home has access to suitable private and/or communal amenity space which can include communal gardens, balconies and roof terraces⁴. In this case, only flat 2 would have access to a roof terrace, and only one of the other proposed dwellings would have access to a small balcony. As the nearest area of significant public open space is around 700 metres from the site, future occupants would not benefit from convenient access to that.
12. The nature of the accommodation and its location may mean that it is likely to suit occupants who are content to live over a public house in a town centre environment. However, this does not mean that they would not benefit from access to minimum standards of outdoor amenity space. Furthermore, three of the flats would contain more than one bedroom meaning that they would potentially be occupied by families with children.
13. I conclude on the second main issue that the proposal would not ensure that satisfactory living conditions would be created for future occupants meaning that it would be contrary to national policy⁵, DPD policy DC61, associated guidance, and policy 3.5 of the London Plan which collectively seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for the occupants of buildings including in terms of achieving minimum ceiling heights and the provision of suitable outdoor spaces.

Other Matters

14. The proposal would create four additional homes and make more intensive use of land in an accessible urban location. However, as the number of new dwellings would be modest, I attach only moderate weight to the social and economic benefits that would be delivered.
15. One of the Council's reasons for refusal was that, in the absence of a legal agreement to secure financial contributions towards school places, the proposal fails to satisfactorily mitigate the infrastructure impact of the development contrary to DPD policies DC29 and DC72 and London Plan policy 8.2. As I am

³ Policy 3.5 and Table 3.3 of the Housing Standards Minor Alterations to the London Plan (2016)

⁴ Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document (2010) section 10.

⁵ NPPF paragraph 17, 4th bullet point.

dismissing the appeal for other reasons, this is not a matter that I need to consider further.

Conclusion

16. By virtue of the conflict with the DPD and London Plan policies that I have referred to, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan. As the moderate social and economic benefits would not outweigh the harm that would be caused with regard to the main issues that I have identified, material considerations do not indicate that planning permission should be granted.
17. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

William Fieldhouse

INSPECTOR