
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 November 2016

by Alex Hutson MATP CMLI MArborA

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

Decision date: 1 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/W/16/3156881
56 Chase Road, Southgate N14 4ET

- 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 Horattas against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 16/01453/FUL, dated 4 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing house into 4no self contained units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. I note that the Council's description of the proposed development on its decision notice provides a greater level of detail than the description provided on the application form and more accurately reflects what is shown on the submitted plans. In addition to the conversion of the existing house into four flats, the Council's description also includes an extension to the roof at the sides, a side dormer with doors and balcony, a single storey rear and side extension, two storey side and rear extensions and front and rear rooflights. I have therefore considered the appeal having regard to the Council's description of the proposed development.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a traditional, two-storey detached dwelling located on the corner of Chase Road and Wolverton Way. Whilst some other uses exist in the vicinity of the appeal site, including a children's nursery and a synagogue, the area is predominantly residential in character. Dwellings on the eastern side of Chase Road, the side of the road on which the appeal property is located, predominantly comprise traditional, two-storey detached and semi-
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- detached properties which share a defined building line. A more varied mix of dwelling types can be found along the western side of Chase Road, including a number of blocks of flats, some of which are three storeys in height.
5. During my site visit, I observed that although there is some variety in the design, detailing and roof forms of dwellings along the eastern side of Chase Road, the design, detailing and roof form of the appeal property broadly mirrors the design, detailing and roof form of 54 Chase Road, located on the opposite corner of Chase Road and Wolverton Way. These properties also share a similar setback from both Chase Road and Wolverton Way. In addition, the appeal property and No 54 both have rear gardens of a generous size and length.
 6. The strong elements of symmetry between these two dwellings provide an attractive, balanced and uniform entrance into Wolverton Way. Furthermore, the setback of these properties from Wolverton Way and their respective large rear gardens, contributes to a sense of space and openness at the entrance to and along Wolverton Way. I therefore consider that in its current form, the appeal property sits comfortably within its corner plot and contributes strongly and positively to the character and appearance of the streetscape and area.
 7. I acknowledge that there would be no increase in height of the appeal property as a result of the proposed extensions and alterations. I also note that the appellant considers that the main roof would remain a dominant feature of the appeal property, given that the roof of the rear two-storey extension would step down and would not include features such as dormer windows.
 8. Nevertheless, the proposed roof extensions and alterations, in combination with the single and two storey extensions, would considerably increase the overall scale, bulk and massing of the appeal property. This would greatly increase its prominence within the streetscape and would appear discordant with the character of the original building. Furthermore, these additions and alterations would substantially alter the strong level of symmetry that currently exists between the appeal property and No 54 and would reduce the sense of space and openness at the entrance to and along Wolverton Way.
 9. As such, the proposal would fail to maintain the prevailing pattern of development along this part of Chase Road and Wolverton Way and would fail to respect the context of this important corner location. Consequently, it would result in an incongruous form of development that would give rise to significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property, streetscape and area.
 10. The appellant highlights other examples of roof extensions and alterations to dwellings in the area, including at 58 and 64 Chase Road. Nevertheless, given that Nos 58 and 64 do not occupy corner locations, any alterations that these properties have been subject to are somewhat less prominent. Moreover, in respect of the roof extensions to No 58, these, in my opinion, are not particularly in keeping with the character of the host dwelling and create a top heavy appearance. Reference is also made to additions to 27 Chestnut Close, consented under Ref TP/00/0839. However, this reference number indicates that planning consent was likely granted a considerable time ago and therefore under a different planning policy context. In addition, this dwelling did not appear to me to have originally shared strong elements of symmetry with other dwellings on the corners of Chestnut Close and Wolverton Way and it therefore

sits within a different context to that of the appeal property. I therefore do not consider that these examples justify a planning permission in this instance.

11. Whilst I acknowledge that architectural styles should not be imposed or innovation stifled, it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. It is clear, in light of my reasoning above, that I consider the proposal would not achieve this objective.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to Policy CP30- Maintaining and Improving the Quality of the Built and Open Environment, of the Enfield Council Core Strategy (Core Strategy); and Policies DMD13- Roof Extensions and DMD37- Achieving High Quality and Design-Led Development, of the Enfield Council Development Management Document 2014 (DMD). These policies require, amongst other things, development to respect the character and appearance of the property and area and to reinforce local distinctiveness. These policies are consistent with the broad aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework which seek planning to take account of the different roles and character of different areas.
13. The proposal would also be contrary to Policy 7.4- Local Character, of the London Plan- the Spatial Development Strategy for London- Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 March 2016 (London Plan) which requires development to provide a high quality design and to sustain, protect and enhance local character.

Living conditions

14. The appeal property is located within a built up part of the Borough and along a busy main road. It is therefore likely that the area is already subject to a moderate level of noise and disturbance as a result of vehicle movement and pedestrian movement along Chase Road. Indeed, it is unreasonable to expect total peace and quiet within such an urban context.
15. The Council acknowledges that the conversion of the appeal property into flats would not give rise to the clustering of such development and in this sense, would not cause undue harm to the residential character of the area. It is therefore unclear why the Council refused the application on the basis of a potential increase in noise, general disturbance and additional comings and goings as a result of the proposal in light of this. Moreover, the Council has not substantially expanded on their concerns in this regard within their evidence.
16. Therefore, having regard to the urban context of the area and that the proposal would not result in a cluster of converted dwellings, it seems to me that any additional activity generated as a result of the proposal would not give rise to any harmful effects on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in respect of noise and disturbance.
17. The proposal would therefore, in this regard, comply with Policies DMD5- Residential Conversions, of the DMD. This policies requires, amongst other things, development to respect the residential character of an area and not to lead to an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance for the occupiers of adjoining properties.
18. The Council also cites conflict, in respect of this main issue, with Policy CP30, of the Core Strategy, Policy DMD 37, of the DMD and Policies 3.4- Optimising

Housing Potential and 7.4, of the London Plan. Nevertheless, these policies do not specifically relate to living conditions matters and are therefore not of any clear relevance to this main issue.

Other matters

19. The proposal would make a contribution, albeit a limited contribution to housing supply and housing mix within the Borough. It would also be within a location with a good level of access to local services and facilities. It is clear that the proposal would provide a good standard of living accommodation for any future occupiers. I also have no reason to doubt that it would be constructed using sustainable building methods and would demonstrate a good level of energy efficiency. In addition, there would be some modest benefits to the economy through the creation of short term construction jobs, council tax revenue and local spending by any future occupiers. However, these matters are not, individually or cumulatively, sufficient in my view to outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area.
20. I acknowledge a number of neighbour concerns, including in respect of privacy, highway safety, refuse provision, ecology, flooding, fire risk, pollution, pressure on local services and property devaluation. With regard to property devaluation, this is not a material planning consideration to which I can afford any significant weight. With regard to the other matters, these were not raised as a concern by the Council and on the basis of the evidence before me and my own observations, I have no substantive reasons to take a different view.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex Hutson

INSPECTOR