
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 23 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/16/3159483

Land between 12-14 Torrington Road, Ruislip HA4 0AT

- 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 David Tilbury against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 71930/APP/2016/2024 dated 26 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey, 3-bed, attached house with associated parking and amenity space and single storey rear extension to No.14 and detached garage block to rear for all properties, involving installation of vehicular crossovers to front and demolition of existing garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The description of the proposal varies between the application form and the subsequent documents. I have used the description on the appeal form as it describes the proposal more succinctly.
3. The address of the appeal site is given on the application form as 12-14 Torrington Road. The proposal would not physically adjoin 12 Torrington Road, and so I have used the address on the appeal form, as it refers more clearly to the location of the appeal site.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing building, and on the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located within a predominantly residential area. The development would result in the subdivision of the plot at 14 Torrington Road, and the construction of a new two storey dwelling which would adjoin the existing property.
 6. The surrounding area is characterised by early 20th century terraced properties, many of which are arranged in rows of four. The dwellings share some distinctive features such as double-height bay windows, decorative gables, and porches over the front doors. Despite some unsympathetic alterations, such as the removal of the gabled porch at 20 Torrington Road, the original form and
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design of the terraces remain legible. The appearance of the property at No 14 is characteristic of the local architectural style.

7. I accept that the proposed new house would reflect the design of No 14, using matching materials and incorporating features such as the front bay windows and porch. However, within each terrace, the four dwellings were designed in a uniform manner, with a pair of doors in the centre of the front elevation, and the other two set at either end. The bay windows are arranged in pairs, with the chimneys set centrally above them. The development would substantially extend the existing terrace, departing significantly from its original symmetrical design. It would also disrupt the composition of the group, thus harming the appearance of No 14 and the adjacent properties.
8. By infilling the plot, and bringing the built form of the terrace significantly closer to 12 Torrington Road, the development would considerably reduce the gap between the adjacent terraces. The gaps are an important characteristic of the original layout of the area. They provide rhythm and definition to the terraces, and allow a degree of spaciousness in an otherwise quite densely built-up area. By contrast, the new development would appear cramped within the site, and would be significantly at odds with the prevailing layout of the area.
9. My attention has been drawn to examples of the various developments in the gaps between the terraces within the wider area. I note that many of these are garages or single storey extensions which leave the original span of the gaps legible at first floor level. Conversely, in a number of instances, two storey side extensions have been erected within the gaps, leaving only very small spaces between the houses. I am not aware of the planning history of those cases, or the policies that applied at the time of their consideration. Nonetheless, they serve to confirm that such extensions are disruptive to the form and layout of the terraces, which are important elements of their character and appearance.
10. The principle of residential development in this location is accepted by the Council, and the contribution of a dwelling to the housing supply is to be given weight. The scheme would also utilise previously developed land. However, these factors would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
11. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies (November 2012), insofar as it requires development to enhance the local distinctiveness of the area. It would further conflict with Policies BE13 and BE15 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1998) Saved Policies 27th September 2007, which respectively resist any development which would fail to harmonise with the existing street scene, or with the architectural composition and proportions of the original building.
12. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR