
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2017

by Jason Whitfield BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/16/3164252

2 Raisins Hill, Eastcote HA5 2BS

- 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 S Shah against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 32216/APP/2016/1945, dated 22 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing and erection of replacement 2-storey detached single family dwelling house.
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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 Raisins Hill Area of Special Local Character.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached, two-storey dwelling located within the Raisins Hill Area of Special Local Character (ASLC). Raisins Hill was built as part of a wider estate during the 1950s which was generally based upon the principles of spacious and leafy Garden Suburbs. The area has a well-defined character identifiable by the continuity of building styles, materials, architectural detailing and spacing between the houses. Largely residential, it is characterised by a uniform pattern of two-storey detached and semi-detached houses with hipped roofs and bay windows. The landscaping and views into back gardens all form part of the setting and contribute towards the open and verdant, suburban character of the area.
 4. The appeal property is a two-storey detached dwelling located on a generously sized plot. The width of the plot is around 17m in contrast to what the appellant suggests is a typical plot width of around 9m. Surrounding properties on Raisins Way are generally semi-detached, although there is cluster of detached properties around 150m from the appeal site. The detached nature of the property and large plot size means the appeal site stands apart somewhat from the prevailing pattern of development. Nevertheless the property contains similarities in its design to other dwellings in the area with its use of materials, its hipped roof, flank wall chimney stack and two-storey, tiled and canted bay window. Moreover, the generous plot size and spacing to the
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adjacent properties makes a positive contribution to the open and spacious characteristics of the street scene.

5. The Heritage Statement submitted on behalf of the appellant contains some criticism of the designation of the ASLC and of the appeal property itself. Whilst I have considered those detailed representations and recognise that not all features of the area positively contribute to its significance, from what I have seen and the evidence before me, I am satisfied that the area I have described above is of sufficient historical significance to be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. Therefore, having regard to paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the effect of the development on that significance should be taken into account.
6. It is proposed to demolish the existing property and erect a two-storey detached dwelling in its place. I note the dwelling would be similar in appearance to the flats facing Chamberlain Way and that it would be the first property on this side of the road when entering Raisins Way from Chamberlain Way. However, the dwelling would be sited a significant distance from the properties on Chamberlain Way and in my view it would be read more within the context of the street scene of Raisins Hill.
7. I do not disagree with the appellant that the loss of the appeal property would necessarily result in the loss of a building of considerable importance to the ASLC. I also share the appellant's view that a new dwelling could be accommodated on the site without detracting from the character of the area.
8. However, the proposed dwelling would be around double the size of the existing property and around 1.1m greater in height. Moreover, the width of the dwelling would be substantial with gaps of around 1.5m to the boundaries either side. It would, therefore, be a considerable increase in the scale of built form on the site and would lead to a significant reduction in the existing gap between the appeal property and 4 Raisins Hill. In addition, the proposed dwelling would sit forward of the building line of the properties on this side of Raisins Hill. Whilst that is currently the case, this would nevertheless accentuate the visual prominence of the proposed dwelling. This would be further augmented by the sloping topography of the road either side of the appeal site.
9. Furthermore, whilst I note that some detailing has been replicated from properties elsewhere in the area, the appearance of the dwelling would be distinctly symmetrical, with protruding wings, a crown roof and substantial dormer windows. It would not incorporate bay windows and would not, in my view, appear as a pair of semi-detached properties.
10. As a result, the scale of the dwelling, its design and the extent to which it would occupy its plot would result in an incongruous and obtrusive addition to the street scene. The proposal would fail to reflect the architectural character of surrounding properties and would not reinforce the distinctive character of the wider estate. In addition, the reduction in the gap between the appeal property and No 4 would result in a dwelling which appears unduly cramped. I recognise the gap to No 4 would be more than 5m at first floor level and that around 30m space would be retained to the nearest property to the north. However, the reduction in the gap would nevertheless diminish views towards the rear gardens beyond. The absence of those views, as a consequence, would, to some extent, erode the open and spacious character of the ASLC.

The existence of an extension at the adjacent property would not mitigate this harm.

11. I recognise that paragraph 60 of the Framework states that architectural styles or particular tastes should not be imposed. However, the Framework is clear that it is proper to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. The appellant refers to paragraph 127 of the Framework, however, it relates to the designation of conservation areas. I disagree it is of particular relevance here.
12. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the Raisins Hill Area of Special Local Character. Consequently, it would conflict with Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies 2012 (LPP1) which state that new development should achieve a high quality design which enhances local distinctiveness and that the Council will conserve and enhance locally recognised historic features such as Areas of Special Local Character.
13. It would also conflict with Policy BE5 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies 2012 (LPP2) which states that within Areas of Special Local Character new development should harmonise with the materials, design features, architectural style and building heights in the area. Finally, it would conflict with Policies BE13 and BE19 of the LPP2 which state that development will not be permitted which fails to harmonise with the street scene and that new development within residential areas should complement or improve the character of the area.
14. Policy BE15 of the LPP2 relates to alterations and extensions of existing buildings and is not therefore relevant here.

Other Matters

15. I note the concerns raised by local residents in respect of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and the level of proposed parking provision. However, on the evidence before me, I see no reason to come to alternative conclusions than those of the Council that the proposal would accord with Policies BE20, BE21, BE24 and AM14 of the LPP2. There is no evidence that the proposal would result in significant disruption during construction works.
16. The appellant's Design and Access Statement refers to a requirement to meet the accommodation needs of his family, notably the needs of an elderly dependant relative for a degree of privacy and independence within the household. However, little evidence of those needs has been provided and I am conscious that the development would remain indefinitely, regardless of the changing needs of its occupiers. This matter would not therefore outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jason Whitfield

INSPECTOR