
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2017

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 23 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/17/3170932
2 Besley Street, London SW16 6BD

- 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 Jon Fenning against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/6974, dated 29 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of two-storey 1-bedroom unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The plans submitted with the planning application have formed the basis of my consideration of the appeal. However, the appellant has submitted amended plans, referred to as the Revision B set of drawings, to address some of the issues raised, and I have also taken these into consideration.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms the end property of a terrace which comprises seven paired dwellings dating from around the late 19th century. Characteristic features of the two storey dwellings include the half-hipped roofs with central chimneys, and the regular mirrored frontages of each pair.
5. The site itself is within the garden plot to the side of 2 Besley Street. The development would result in the subdivision of the plot, and the construction of a new dwelling adjacent to the existing house. A planning application¹ was previously submitted for a new dwelling on the site, which was dismissed on appeal². The current appeal scheme is a revision of the previous scheme in response to some of the concerns raised by the Council.
6. The contemporary design of the proposed dwelling is intended as a deliberate contrast to the more traditional character of the adjacent terrace. Such an

¹ 2016/0633

² APP/H5960/W/16/3148808

approach can often work, providing the new design can be successfully integrated within the existing context. I agree that the strong contrast in styles would differentiate the new dwelling. However, the visual contrast between the development and its neighbours would be stark.

7. The appellant states that the development would respect the scale, building height and materials of the existing dwellings, but I disagree. The frontage of the new dwelling would be significantly wider than that of No 2, and this would be exacerbated by the small overhang at the outer corner of the first floor. The proposed flat roof would limit the height of the new dwelling, and would leave much of the hipped roof of No 2 visible. However, the new roof would exceed the eaves height of No 2, and would thus create an uncomfortable visual juxtaposition. The side elevation of the new dwelling would also be uncharacteristically deep, creating a long, monolithic wall that would be at odds with its surroundings.
8. Whilst the proposed ground floor windows would mirror the dimensions of those at No 2, they would be spaced more widely. The proposed upper floor windows would have a different size and disposition entirely. The arrangement of the fenestration, in conjunction with the long bands of render and timber cladding on the side elevation, would give the development a strong horizontal emphasis that would be at odds with the marked vertical emphasis of the adjacent paired dwellings. In terms of proposed materials, only the white render would reflect the use of materials in the existing terrace. Whilst I acknowledge the reasons for the use of timber cladding, it would nonetheless appear incongruous in this location.
9. This approach has been taken to produce a standalone building that would avoid the disruption of the pairing sequence of the terrace, as referred to in the previous inspector's decision. Whilst it would achieve that aim, I am concerned that, rather than complimenting the terrace, the new building would dominate and compete with it, in terms of scale and the marked contrast in style. On this prominent corner location, the development would command the eye, and draw attention away from the more modest aesthetic of the terrace.
10. I agree that the design in itself is not without merit. However, in my view, it would fall short of the bar of outstanding or innovative design that is envisaged in the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst I acknowledge the limitations of the plot in terms of its size and shape, the fact that the site is thus constrained would not overcome my concerns about the impact of the proposal.
11. Drawing these factors together, I find that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. I therefore conclude that it would be contrary to Policy DMS1 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (DMPD, March 2016), which amongst other things requires developments to ensure a high level of physical integration with their surroundings, and DMPD Policy DMH4, insofar as it requires new build accommodation to reflect local character. It would also be at odds with the NPPF which seeks to secure high quality design.
12. The appellant argues that the development would optimise the potential of the site, which is a policy objective of Policy DMS1. I agree that residential development in this location would not be unacceptable in principle, and that the proposal would be acceptable in other regards such as space standards and

residential and neighbour amenity. However, these matters would not strike an acceptable balance with the harm I have identified.

13. It is contended that the development would achieve high levels of sustainability. On my visit, I noted a number of businesses nearby, but their number and range of services is limited. There are also public transport options in the vicinity of the site. However, whilst the location could therefore be regarded as reasonably sustainable, it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the development would be highly sustainable. The appellant also states that there would be the potential to increase biodiversity, but it is unclear how this would be achieved.
14. Whilst the side windows may give rise to some increased natural surveillance along Eardley Road, there is no evidence before me to suggest that this outcome would be necessary or desirable. I can therefore afford the matter little weight.
15. My attention has been drawn to a number of examples where proposals of a contemporary design have been permitted. These include developments at 356 Garratt Lane, 133-135 Eardley Road, 133 Besley Street, and 168 Upper Street. However, I do not have the full details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted, and so I cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. Whilst they serve to demonstrate that a contemporary approach can be acceptable, each case must be considered on its own merits. I have had regard to the representation in support of the proposal, but this has not led me to a different conclusion.
16. Finally, even if the scheme were amended, as per the Revision B drawings, this would not change my overall conclusions on its acceptability.
17. For the reasons above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR