
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2017

by G J Fort BA PGDip LLM MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/17/3170005

Land adjoining 2a Roseheath Road, Hounslow TW4 5HH

- 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 Dr Latif Kaba (Elsak PLC) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00959/ADJ2A/P6, dated 13 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as the "erection of a one-bedroom detached bungalow designed for the elderly, soft landscaping with provision for two secure cycle stands, existing footpath to Roseheath Road to be retained".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are firstly, the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; secondly, the effects of the proposed development on highway and pedestrian safety; thirdly, whether the proposed development would provide private amenity space sufficient to meet the day-to-day needs of its future occupants; and fourthly, whether the proposed development makes adequate arrangements for parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a rectangular portion of a long narrow landscaped strip located at the corner of Roseheath Road and Wellington's Road South, which is level, grassed and currently occupied by three telecommunications cabinets. The strip of land of which the appeal site is part forms an open buffer between Wellington Road South, which is a bus route, and the dwellings addressing it and Roseheath Road. The site is bounded to the rear by a footpath which separates it from the two-storey gable end of 2a Roseheath Road. Buildings in the surroundings of the appeal site are in the main between two and three storeys, and whilst there is no predominant building line along Wellington's Road South are set back behind front gardens.
 4. The appeal scheme would develop a bungalow on the site, hipped roofed, with a rectangular plan form, the long edges of which would be its principal and rear elevations. The bungalow would be set back to a modest degree from
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Wellington's Road South which its principal elevation would address. Amenity space would be provided to its front and sides, including space for refuse storage and cycle parking. The bungalow would be set in from the boundary with the footpath to its rear.

5. I noted no predominant building line along Wellington's Road South, including Nos 261-267, which have markedly shallower setbacks than most of the other dwellings in the immediate environs of the appeal site. Nevertheless the appeal scheme would introduce substantial development much closer to the road than the deeper residential setbacks of the dwellings to which it most closely visually relates. In doing so it would reduce the spaciousness of the appeal site and streetscene more generally and thus appear as a discordant feature within it.
6. Moreover, the proposed development's incongruity in these regards would be exacerbated by its diminutive scale, which is a jarring contrast to the larger scale of the domestic buildings within its immediate environs. This aspect, taken together with the appeal scheme's siting would impart a cramped and shoehorned character to the resultant development. As a consequence, the proposed development would be of considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area, and would therefore not contribute positively to the townscape's variety.
7. In arriving at this view I am aware of references in the Council's Urban Context and Character Study Supplementary Planning Document to housing with minimum setbacks in the wider surroundings of the appeal site. However, I saw that this development pattern does not pertain to the majority of dwellings addressing Wellington's Road South in the immediate environs of the appeal site. As a consequence, the SPD's guidance in this regard does not alter my conclusions regarding the harmful effects that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of its surroundings.
8. Whilst I am mindful that the appeal site has little in terms of landscaping, and is subject to littering, it nevertheless contributes to the spaciousness of the streetscene. The proposed development would diminish this contribution to a substantial degree, and the harmful effects of this would not be mitigated by additional landscaping within its amenity space.
9. Consequently, for the reasons given above, the proposed development would cause considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area, and would therefore conflict with Policies CC1 and CC2 of Hounslow's Local Plan (the Local Plan) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Taken together, and amongst other matters, these policies seek to ensure that new development responds to local character and reflects the identity of local surroundings.

Highway and Pedestrian Safety

10. The proposed development would introduce a long, and with the exception of a small window serving a bathroom, largely blank elevation in close proximity to the footpath that runs between the appeal site and the side of 2a Roseheath Road. I saw that the footway adjacent to Wellington's Road South in the environs of the appeal site is narrow, and at the time of my afternoon site visit, admittedly only a snapshot, the road had a constant stream of traffic flowing along it. As a consequence, the footway to the rear of the appeal site currently

offers an attractive alternative to the pavement next to the road, and forms part of the principal route through to 245 to 253 Wellington's Road South.

11. The siting of the proposed bungalow's long wall, and its relationship to the gable end of No 2a would enclose a considerable proportion of the footpath to the rear between largely blank walls. Whilst the length and scale of the wall adjacent to the footpath would both be more limited than that of a previously dismissed appeal scheme¹ concerning the site, it would nevertheless create an oppressive and unwelcoming atmosphere along the stretch of footpath that it enclosed. This would have a considerable adverse effect on the perception of pedestrian safety which would limit the attractiveness of the footpath, particularly in the hours of darkness. As a consequence, the proposed development would fail to maximise opportunities for walking within its environs.
12. The positioning of the boundary treatments around the proposed development due to their proximity to the junction of Wellington's Road South with Roseheath Road could restrict the emerging visibility of drivers thereon. However, I consider that appropriately worded conditions could control both boundary and landscaping details adjacent to the junction to ensure that visibility would not be restricted to a harmful degree. As a consequence, I consider that the proposed development would avoid causing a harmful effect to highway safety in this regard.
13. However, the lack of harm caused by the development in this latter respect has only a neutral effect on the overall planning balance, and as a consequence does not outweigh the harm it would cause to the perception of pedestrian safety through its enclosure of the footpath. In this latter regard the proposed development would clearly conflict with Policy EC2 of the Local Plan, which, taken together, and amongst other matters seeks to secure a sustainable local travel network that maximises opportunities for walking.

Amenity Space

14. Policy SC5 of the Local Plan requires new residential developments of 3 habitable rooms to provide 50 SqM of usable amenity space which affords privacy and security. According to the appellant's figures the proposed development would provide 37.5 SqM of amenity space, not including the space to the front and side. Whilst I note that the bungalow would not have 3 habitable rooms, and that older occupants may not require extensive amounts of amenity space, the garden's siting would be closely bounded by publically accessible space on three of its sides and would thus afford very limited privacy to the proposed development's occupants. As a result of this, I consider that the proposed development would not provide private amenity space sufficient to meet the day-to-day needs of its future occupants. I note that the amount of space provided at 2a Roseheath Road is similar in terms of its area to that of the appeal scheme. However, the greater degree of privacy afforded to the users of No 2a's amenity space clearly and materially differentiates it from that of the proposed development.
15. Thus, for the above reasons the proposed development would clearly conflict with Policy SC5, which, amongst other things seeks to ensure that new housing

¹ APP/F5540/A/12/2184004

development is of the highest quality externally and meets the demands of everyday life for its intended occupants.

Parking

16. The proposed development makes no provision for off-street parking. Policy EC2 of the Local Plan establishes, for suburban areas with low levels of public transport accessibility, such as the appeal site², that the maximum parking standards set out in the London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for London- Consolidated with alterations since 2011 (the London Plan) would apply.
17. Parking is restricted adjacent to the appeal site by double yellow lines at the junction of Roseheath Road and Wellington's Road South. There are no such restrictions further along Roseheath Road, although I saw due to the relative narrowness of the highway that cars were only parked on one side of it at the time of my visit. Whilst my afternoon site visit was only a snapshot, I saw spaces available along the road.
18. The proposed development would be of a small scale, and I note that it is intended for use by older people. Moreover, the appeal scheme would make adequate arrangements for cycle parking and, whilst it has a relatively low PTAL rating is very close to bus stops on both sides of Wellington's Road South. These are all aspects of the proposed development that would serve to reduce demand for car-parking, and moreover, I have been supplied with no substantive evidence to suggest that there is excessive parking pressure on Roseheath Road, to the extent that the likely modest levels of additional car-parking arising from the scheme could not be accommodated.
19. These considerations lead me to the view that it has not been established that the maximum car-parking standards as set out in the London Plan would be necessary in this case. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not conflict with Policy EC2 insofar as it seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that development provides an appropriate maximum number of car-parking spaces.

Other Matters

20. The proposed development would deliver an additional housing unit intended for older people. This would be a social benefit, and also meet with the objectives of paragraphs 47 and 159 of the Framework. However, due to the modest scale of the proposed development these matters only weigh in its favour to a minimal degree, and in the overall planning balance are outweighed by the considerable environmental harm caused to the character and appearance of the area, and the social harm it would cause in terms of its reduction of the attractiveness and usability of the footway to its rear.
21. I note disagreements regarding the legal ownership and status of the site. However, this is essentially a private matter that has not been determinative in my assessment of the planning merits of the appeal.
22. The proposed development could meet the minimum internal space requirements of the Local Plan. However, this is merely indicative of an absence of harm in this regard and as a result has only a neutral effect on the

² Which has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 2

overall planning balance. I also note that there were no objections to the appeal scheme, either at application or appeal stage; however, this is not a matter that carries great weight in favour of the scheme.

23. Thus none of these other matters alter my conclusions in respect of the main issues given above.

Conclusion

24. The harm that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of the area, pedestrian safety, and its conflicts with the development plan in terms of the provision of external amenity space, outweigh the lack of harm I have found in relation to its arrangements for parking and the highway safety aspects of its boundary treatments. Moreover, its social and environmental harms would clearly outweigh the limited social benefits it would deliver, and thus the proposed development would not comprise sustainable development for the purposes of the Framework.
25. The proposed development would also conflict with the development plan insofar as the policies that have been drawn to my attention are concerned. As no material considerations have been advanced sufficient to outweigh the proposed development's conflict with the development plan, I conclude, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR