
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2017

by Stephen Normington BSc DipTP MRICS MRTPI FIQ FIHE

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

Decision date: 05 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/17/3171817

Talbot House, 204-226 Imperial Drive, Harrow HA2 7HH

- 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 Stephen Cole against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/4119/6, dated 10 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as single floor roof extension to provide 8 self-contained apartments and associated external alterations to third floor of existing building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises a four storey building, above the lower ground floor, that was originally constructed as offices and has now been recently refurbished and partly converted into residential use. On top of the original flat roof a single storey roof extension has been constructed that is set back from the front elevation facing Imperial Drive and provides for nine residential units. Owing to its length, height and position directly abutting the footway, the building occupies a prominent position in the street scene. This prominence is emphasised also by the regularity of the cladding and the fenestration of the original building.
 4. Although buildings on Imperial Drive do not display any coherent design consistency, buildings to the south of the appeal site and on the western side of the street are predominantly three storey properties with commercial uses on the ground floor with residential uses on the upper floors. Some buildings have had roof extensions but these appear to be limited to the provision of one additional floor.
 5. Immediately to the north is Carmine Court which is a five storey residential block. Ladbroke House, directly opposite, is five and six storeys but is set at a lower ground level to the appeal property and has an intervening landscaped
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strip between the building and the footway. As such, Ladbroke House is less prominent in the street scene and the majority of the building appears at a similar height to the appeal property in views from the street.

6. As Imperial Drive slopes down northwards from the junction with Rayners Lane, the relative height of properties forming the street scene is quite evident in public views northwards from this junction and from the adjacent underground station entrance.
7. The proposed development would involve the construction of a single floor roof extension on top of the previous extension to provide for eight residential units with front and rear balconies. It would have a similar footprint to the floor below and would be constructed of similar materials. An external steel trellis structure would be constructed on top of the original roof to support the extension which would be landscaped with climbing plants.
8. The previous roof extension has little design relationship with the original building but this is not overly apparent due to it being of modest height and set back from the front façade. The proposed additional floor would be of a design that has little relationship to architecture and fenestration of the original building and to that of the floor below. As such, the proposal would result in a building that would appear to lack architectural cohesion and would display two bulky upper floors that markedly contrast with the regularity of the cladding and the fenestration of the original building. The steel trellis, which is not a feature that is evident on other buildings on the street, would add to this degree of incongruity that the proposed development would cause to the appearance of the current building.
9. Notwithstanding the set back of the proposed extension, owing to its height it would be visible from the street and particularly in views looking down the street from the Rayners Lane junction. Owing to the combined height and design style of the existing and proposed roof extensions, in such views the building would appear as having a roof structure that would be disproportionately and unacceptably top heavy and unbalanced and thereby having an incongruous relationship with the original building. As such, the extended building would appear prominent and dominant as a consequence of its increase in height and bulk of the additional floors above the original roof.
10. The development would result in a building that would be higher than those that adjoin it. This matter in itself is not a reason to dismiss this appeal. However, due to the incongruous and awkward nature of the proposed additional floor and taking the above factors into account, the proposal would result in a form of development that unacceptably detracts from the appearance of the original building and the contribution it makes to the character of the street scene.
11. I have taken into account the fact that the proposal would create eight dwellings which would make a modest contribution to housing supply in the Borough. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is made clear in paragraph 7 that sustainable development has economic, environmental and social dimensions, which should not be undertaken in isolation. Despite the benefits arising from eight dwellings in an accessible location, in this case there would be detrimental effects in relation to character and appearance of the area and

conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan. As a consequence of this adverse environmental impact, in terms of the Framework the proposal would not comprise sustainable development and this modest benefit would not outweigh the resultant harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

12. For the above reasons, the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to Policies 7.4B and 7.6B of the London Plan (2015), Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012) and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies. These policies, amongst other things, require extensions to respect the host building, have regard to the scale, proportion and mass of buildings, be appropriate to its context and that development that would harm the local character and appearance will be resisted.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and taking all matters into account, I conclude that the development would be contrary to the relevant policies of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Local Plan and the London Plan. There are no material considerations of such weight as to warrant a decision other than in accordance with the aforementioned Plans. Consequently, the appeal should be dismissed.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR