



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2017

**by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 2 August 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/17/3174014**

**Site along Wakefield Rd, adjacent to no. 1 Wakefield Rd and 34 Colless Rd, London, N15 4NN**

- 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 Bernard Tulkens (Tectonics Architects Ltd) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
  - The application Ref HYG/2017/0218, dated 21 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2017.
  - The development proposed is described on the application form as "the construction of 2 new dwellings on Wakefield Road, on a site adjacent to no. 1 Wakefield Road and 34 Colless Road, London N15 4NN".
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural matters

2. The description of the development is different on the Council's decision notice to that given on the application form and it appears that the appellant agreed to this change. I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis. Although I have not been provided with the details of the application, the parties agree that planning permission has been granted for a substantially similar scheme for the single storey property referred to as "House B" on the plans. My decision therefore focuses on "House A", the proposed 3 storey property.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of House A on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

#### *Character and appearance*

4. Wakefield Road runs broadly north to south with a number of roads connecting to it with an east-west orientation. Although there is some commercial development in the area, these roads are primarily residential in character and mainly consist of 2 and 3 storey terrace housing. The properties on Wakefield Road are set back from the back edge of the pavement allowing some space between the side or fronts of the buildings and the highway. The width of this space varies but it does represent a generally consistent building line. One property has a single storey side extension in this space and several properties have significant boundary treatments. However when traveling along the street the setback at first floor level and above is a significant feature that creates a sense of space and uniformity in the layout of the street.

5. There is significant variation in the styles and detailing of the houses in Wakefield Road and those streets connecting to it. However there is a general consistency in plot width, pitched roof form, and the heights and arrangements of windows. Therefore, despite the variance in detail, there is an overall consistency in the form of the dwellings which has resulted in a locally distinctive and cohesive character.
6. The appeal development would introduce a 3 storey dwelling to the site. It would take up the entirety of the gap between the side wall of 34 Colless Road and the back edge of the pavement on Wakefield Road. It would result in the total loss of this separation not only at ground floor level but up to the eaves level of No.34. The loss of this characteristic setback would be harmful and the dwelling would appear as a discordant addition beyond the established building line on Wakefield Road. Permission has been granted for a single storey dwelling in this location which would remove this gap at ground floor level. However it would not be as dominant as the appeal development where the height would emphasize the discordant siting.
7. I observed a single storey structure to the side of 23 Ashmount Road. While this does impinge on the space to the side of the dwelling, the retention of the setback at first floor level and above does retain the sense of space and prevents that structure appearing dominant. The appellant considers that the approved single storey dwelling would be harmfully out of keeping with the character of the area; however there is some precedent for buildings of that form. There are no taller structures in these setback spaces and as such the appeal scheme would appear as a harmful anomaly. Although there are street trees present these would not sufficiently filter views and the loss of the characteristic setback above ground floor level would still be harmfully apparent.
8. The front windows in House A would be set at different heights and positions to those found on No.34 and the other attached dwellings. This would appear at odds with the rhythm created by the regular height and pattern of windows in these neighbouring houses. When taken together with the flat roof, the appearance and detailing of the appeal house would be substantially at odds with the locally distinctive character and appearance of the other houses. This uncharacteristic appearance would draw attention to the dwelling and further highlight the harmful loss of setback above ground floor level.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is clear that planning decisions should not attempt to impose particular architectural styles, or tastes, or stifle innovation. This must however be considered alongside the Framework's requirement that it is proper to reinforce local distinctiveness. In this case, the harm that would arise is derived through a combination of the loss of setback as well as the design approach having regard to the locally distinctive character of the area.
10. The dwelling would be modestly set in from the frontage of No.34, with its flat roof set lower than the ridge height of its neighbour. This would introduce a degree of subservience to the dwelling, and matching walling materials are proposed to be used. However these factors would not mitigate or minimise the harm that would arise through the height, position, and detailing of the dwelling. A side, rather than a front, door would be provided. In its self I do not consider this would be a discordant feature as other properties, located at the

ends of the east-west orientated roads, have such an arrangement. This however would also not mitigate the harm that would arise.

11. I conclude that House A would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy SP11 of the Haringey Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy UD3 of the Haringey Unitary Development Plan 2006, and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016. These Policies require that development be of the highest standard of design that complements and respects its local context and character. They also require that development is of a nature that is sensitive to the surrounding area and has regard to the pattern and grain of existing spaces. There would also be conflict with the aims of the Framework to reinforce local distinctiveness.
12. House A would also be contrary to Policies DM1 and DM12 of the Council's emerging Development Management DPD (Pre-Submission Version, January 2016). These policies seek a good standard of design that relates positively to the locality including in terms of form and building lines. I give these policies moderate weight as they have similar aims to the adopted development plan policies and the Framework's requirement to reinforce local distinctiveness.

#### *Other matters*

13. The appellant has highlighted changes to the London Plan which increased the minimum housing supply target, noting that the Council's Alterations to Strategic Policies (the ASP), which seeks to deal with this increase, has not yet been adopted. It is the appellant's view that the 'tilted balance' in paragraph 14 of the Framework should be in effect. This requires that, where the development plan is absent, silent, or the relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
14. Neither party has provided any significant evidence on this matter. For example there is no recent update on the progress of the ASP or evidence in respect of the Council's ability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites against the housing requirement in the London Plan, or any emerging requirement in the ASP.
15. The development would result in the provision of two houses. However planning permission has already been granted for two dwellings on this site so there would be no net increase in the number of houses in the Tottenham Hale Growth Area or to meet the housing requirement. I have not been supplied with the details of the approved scheme; however it appears safe to assume House A would be larger. Therefore it would optimise the use of the site to a greater degree and provide a mix of a smaller and a larger dwelling. However House A would still be fairly small given its narrow width and providing only 2 bedrooms. I have no evidence that there is an overriding need for the provision of a dwelling of the size proposed in House A compared to the approved scheme.
16. I therefore can only give limited weight to the benefits of the development through the optimisation of the site. If I were to apply the 'tilted balance', I am of the view that, when considering the policies in the Framework as a whole, the adverse effects that would arise to the character and appearance of the area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It would also

mean that the environmental aspect of sustainable development would not be met.

17. Pre-application advice was sought by the appellant and dialogue continued with the Council's officers through the determination of the earlier application. It appears that, although some concerns were expressed about the previous iteration of the design of House A at the pre-application stage, the general approach of providing a 3 storey house with a contemporary design was not objected to. I have taken this into account, however I can give this little weight in the consideration of this appeal, and I must reach my own view on these matters.

### **Conclusion**

18. For the reasons given above I conclude that House A would be contrary to the development plan and the Framework when each is considered as a whole. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*K Taylor*

INSPECTOR