



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2017

by Caroline Mulloy BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/W/17/3179003

56 Chase Road, Southgate N14 4ET

- 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 Horattas against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 17/01033/FUL, dated 27 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing house into 4 no self-contained flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of future occupiers with specific reference to internal space and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises of a large two storey detached dwelling situated on the corner of Chase Road and Wolverton Way in a predominately residential area although other uses are evident on Chase Road including a synagogue and a nursery. The surrounding area is characterised by mainly detached and semi-detached dwellings and flatted developments of between two and three storeys in height featuring a hipped or gable roof design. Buildings on this section of Chase Road are of a similar age and design with hipped roofs and characteristic curved bay windows.
4. The appeal property broadly mirrors the design, detailing and roof form of No 54 Chase Road situated on the opposite corner of Chase Road and Wolverton Way. The properties are set back a similar distance from the Chase Road and Wolverton Way. Both have prominent chimneys on the elevation facing Chase Road together with a first floor terrace. Both properties have double curved bay windows which front onto Wolverton Way. These factors in combination result in a strong symmetry between the two properties which provide an attractive, balanced and uniform gateway to Wolverton Way.

5. Moreover, the rear gardens of Crescent Way and properties along this section of Wolverton Way and Chestnut Close back onto each other enabling views of the rear gardens over the boundary fencing which contributes to the spacious, open and verdant character of the street.
6. I acknowledge that the proposal retains the overall hipped design and 40 degree pitch of the existing roof also retains the terrace and fenestration pattern. These factors help to retain some symmetry between the host property and No 54 on the front elevation. However, the proposal would result in the loss of the characteristic chimney to the front which contributes to the symmetry between the properties and in addition the side dormer would be clearly visible from the front elevation also resulting in a loss of symmetry.
7. The proposal would include a substantial two storey rear extension to the property together with single storey side extensions resulting in a significant increase in mass and bulk. I acknowledge that the roof of the rear extension would be set down from the main ridge; however, the rear extension would extend a significant depth from the existing main rear elevation. As a result of the combined scale and bulk of the rear and side extensions, the proposal would fail to achieve visual subservience to the host property.
8. The side extension would incorporate the double bay window in an attempt to reflect the character of the host property and achieve symmetry with No 54. However, the proposal would result in a significantly greater depth on the return frontage compared to No 54. The roof balcony would alter the roof line and represent an incongruous feature when viewed from Wolverton Way. In addition, the proposal would result in the loss of the existing set back onto Wolverton Way. Overall, I consider that the extensions would result in the loss of symmetry between the host property and No 54 on the return frontage to Wolverton Way.
9. Furthermore, the loss of the set back onto Wolverton Way and significant rear extension would reduce the sense of spaciousness along Wolverton Way which is characteristic of the area. Moreover, the appeal property is situated in a prominent corner location and the extensions would, therefore, be highly visible in the street scene.
10. Taking these factors in combination, I consider that the proposal would be at odds with the character and appearance of the host property and the area and fail to respect the context of this important corner location.
11. Attention is drawn to a previous application which was dismissed at appeal¹ on the grounds that the proposed roof extensions and alterations, in combination with the single and two storey extensions, would considerably increase the overall scale, bulk and massing of the appeal property which the Inspector considered would greatly increase its prominence within the streetscape. He also considered that the proposal would alter the strong level of symmetry between the appeal property and No 54 and reduce the sense of spaciousness along Wolverton Way.
12. The current appeal proposal retains the hipped design and pitch of the main roof unlike the previous appeal proposal which altered the pitch to 45 degrees and incorporated a crown roof. Furthermore, the current appeal proposal would retain a greater degree of symmetry with No 54 on the front elevation. The current appeal proposal would, nevertheless, result in significant additional mass and bulk and the loss of symmetry with No 54 on Wolverton Way. It would also reduce the

¹ Appeal reference APP/Q5300/W/16/3156881

sense of spaciousness which currently exists on Wolverton Way. Consequently, the current proposal fails to overcome the concerns of the previous Inspector.

13. Attention is drawn to additions made to 27 Chestnut Close, consented under REF TP/00/0839. However, this proposal was granted consent some considerable time ago and within a different development plan context. Furthermore, the dwelling does not have such a strong sense of symmetry with the opposing dwelling. This case is not, therefore, directly comparable to the appeal property which limits the weight which I can attach to it in my Decision.
14. Whilst I acknowledge that architectural styles should not be imposed or innovation stifled, paragraph 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that it is property to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. For the reasons stated, the proposal fails to meet this objective.
15. For the reasons stated, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policy CP30 of the Council's Core Strategy, Policy 7.4 of the London Plan 2016 and Policies DMD13 and DMD37 of the Development Management Document which collectively, amongst other things, seek to ensure a high quality of design which respects the character and appearance of the property and area and to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Living Conditions

16. The proposal would enable the conversion of the property into four self-contained flats. The Council have calculated that three of the units would meet the minimum standards. However, it considers that proposed flat 4 within the loft space would at 41m² fall significantly below the standard of 50m² Gross Internal Area (GIA) for a one bed two person flat as set out at Policy 3.5 and table 3.3 of the London Plan. However, the bedroom for Flat 4 would measure 8.75m² which would be classed as a single bedroom as opposed to a double bedroom. The proposal would also have a shower room and according to the Technical housing standards (THS)-nationally described space standard (2015) this would result in a requirement of 37m² GIA.
17. The Council considers that there would be limited useable height above 2.3m which would reduce the useable internal floor space further. The Standards require that an area with headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the GIA unless used solely for storage. It also requires that there is a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area. The appellant considers that the flat would have a ceiling height of between 2.1m and 2.6m and, therefore, have an average of 2.35m ceiling height; however, I consider this to be an overly simplistic assessment. Whilst the proposal would meet the required internal floor space requirement in the THS, given the limited evidence before me, I cannot be certain that Flat 4 would achieve a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area. This is a matter on which I would have sought the views of parties had I decided to allow the appeal.
18. Concerns are also raised regarding the outlook from the living room and dining room windows of flats 1 and 2 which the Council considers would look directly onto the two storey brick wall of No 58 Chase Road.
19. I note that the kitchen/morning room of Flat 2 would also be served by a window to the front. However, the living room would only be served by a single window which would face directly onto the brick elevation of No 58. This principal habitable room would, therefore, have a very poor outlook to the detriment of

future occupiers. The dining room window of flat 3 would also face onto the same flank wall of No 58, although the adjoining living room would have a large window at first floor level which would provide some outlook to the open plan space.

20. The windows on the side elevation of Flat 1 including two bedrooms, and a kitchen/living room would be in close proximity to the boundary of the property with Wolverton Way. It is not clear whether the existing brick boundary wall would remain, however, if so there would also be the potential for poor outlook from those windows, in particular the proposed kitchen/living room and bedroom 1 which are only served by one window.
21. Taking these factors in combination, I conclude that the proposal would provide poor quality living accommodation for future occupiers in terms of outlook. Furthermore, I cannot be certain that Flat 4 would achieve a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policy 3.5 of the London Plan, Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy, Policy DMD8 of the DMD and the Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Guidance which collectively seek to ensure that developments preserve amenity and are of the highest quality in terms of, amongst other things, internal space. It would also conflict with paragraph 17 of the Framework which seeks to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Other matters

22. The proposal would make a contribution, albeit limited, to housing land supply. It would also make a contribution to the local economy during the construction phase and in the longer term as future occupiers utilise local services. However, these benefits are not, individually or cumulatively, sufficient to outweigh the totality of harm which I have identified.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons stated and taking all other considerations into account, the appeal should be dismissed.

Caroline Mulloy

Inspector