



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2017

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/W/17/3179998

21A Grosvenor Road, East Ham, London E6 1HE

- 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 Donovan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref 17/01026/FUL, dated 23 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 22 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a building containing six 1-bedroom flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - The character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - The living conditions of occupiers of 65 and 67 Grangewood Street, with particular reference to privacy and light; and
 - Whether the proposed development would make adequate provision for refuse storage.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is located at the end of Grosvenor Road close to its junction with Grangewood Street. It is an awkwardly shaped, tapering site that, although used for the parking and storage of vehicles, also appears to provide access to the rears of a number of properties on Grangewood Street.
4. It would be to Grosvenor Road, however, that the proposed development would face. Here, as with other nearby streets, the prevailing pattern and form of development is of residential terraces. Although the east and west side of Grosvenor Road differ subtly in their appearance, I saw there to be a number of key design features that create a distinct rhythm and a pleasingly coherent and unified character and appearance to development along the street. The chamfered ground floor bays to properties on the eastern side of the street are replicated and added to with similarly chamfered two storey bays on the western side, whilst the protruding parapet party walls at roof level break up the mass of the terraces' otherwise lengthy roofscape. There are a mix of brick-faced and render-faced properties along both sides of the street but,

broadly consistent along the western side, is a contrasting string course between ground and first floor. Together, these features contribute positively to the character and appearance of Grosvenor Road.

5. The appeal proposal would respond in a largely positive manner to these features by employing chamfered bays and a string course between levels. The siting of the proposed building would also follow the alignment of the adjoining terrace. However, and fatally in my judgement, the proposal would be built over three floors and it would have a flat roof set behind a parapet wall at roof level. As a consequence, the second floor level would rise above the level of the receding pitched roofs of the adjoining terrace on the western side of Grosvenor Road. This would result in an awkward and incongruously jarring juxtaposition between the existing terrace and the proposed building, overwhelming the adjoining terrace and setting it at odds with the scale, form and massing of the surrounding terraced properties. Equally harmful would be the box-like slab sided flank elevation that would present itself at the entrance to Grosvenor Road from Grangewood Street and would dominate the surrounding area.
6. Thus, whilst picking up on certain design cues from surrounding buildings and terraces that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the proposed building would fail to translate these into a coherent, well-proportioned whole or one that would respond positively to its context and its surroundings. It would fail to relate well as a whole to the character or appearance of the surrounding area, instead appearing incongruously and obtrusively out of scale with that which surrounds it. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would be contrary to London Plan (LP) policies 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6, Core Strategy (CS) policies S1, S6, SP1, SP2 and SP3 and policy SP8 of the Detailed Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD). Together, these policies seek to secure high quality development that relates well to, and respects, the positive elements and features of the borough and they reflect one of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that planning should seek to secure high quality design.
7. I note the appellant's suggestion that the land is no longer required for its current use and that the proposal would secure its productive re-use. I note too that the Council consider that the indicative proposed landscaping scheme would make a positive contribution to the area. Whilst these matters weigh moderately in favour of the proposal, they are not sufficient to overcome the harm that I have identified.
8. I also saw the 4-storey residential blocks diagonally opposite the appeal site that the appellant considers do not respect the existing terraces. That may be so, but they are clearly an example of development from a different era and their relationship with the nearby terraces is not directly comparable with the appeal site. I therefore give these factors limited weight.

Living Conditions

9. The rear corner of the building and its three storey rear outrigger would be situated close to the rears of the adjacent dwellings that front on to Grangewood Street. Whilst the form and layout of the rear corner of the building affords some space between it and the adjacent rear outriggers, this would be limited. I saw that there were windows and doors within the rear

facing elevations of these outriggers at both ground and first floor. These would face directly towards the largely blank, but substantial, 3 storey mass of the rear corner of the proposed dwelling. The rear elevations of Nos. 65 and 67, in particular, would be closest to the proposed dwelling, but I also noted that there were windows within the recessed areas between outriggers along this row.

10. I accept that the proposed building would be located to the north and northeast of the rear of these Grangewood Street properties. Thus, I agree with the appellant that the proposal would be unlikely to give rise to any direct overshadowing or loss of sunlight. However, the scale of the proposed building, and its proximity to the rears of these properties on Grangewood Street, would significantly affect the outlook from those properties and substantially, if not completely, block sky views. As a consequence, the proposal would have an overbearing impact upon the outlook from those properties that would result in a loss of light from what is currently a relatively unobstructed aspect across the open yard.
11. It is not clear to what extent the areas around the proposed building would be separated from those around the Grangewood Street properties. However, regardless of how this might be achieved at ground floor level, upper floor windows at the rear corner of the proposed building would face directly towards, in two directions, the rears of Nos. 65 and 67. This would also allow elevated views, at close quarters, of the yard areas around these and other adjacent properties. The proposal would therefore fail to secure high quality, neighbourly development and, for these reasons, it would be contrary to LP policies 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6, CS policies H1, S6, SP1, SP2 and SP3 and policy SP8 of the Detailed Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD). Together, these policies seek to secure high quality, neighbourly development that contributes towards wider aims of achieving successful, distinctive and healthy places in which to live.

Refuse Storage

12. LP policy 5.17 and CS policy INF3 both seek to ensure that, amongst other things, development proposals make adequate provision for refuse facilities. None of the proposed flats would be provided with direct access to the shared amenity space to the rear of the building where the bin store would be located. Instead, access to the bin store at the rear would require occupiers to exit the building on to Grosvenor Road, walk around the gate at the side, and then around the perimeter of the building towards the far corner of the site to the bin store. A similarly lengthy journey would be required in reverse to move the bins to the bin collection point closer to the entrance to the site from Grosvenor Road.
13. Although the development plan policies do not elaborate upon what they consider to be adequate provision for refuse facilities, it seems to me that what is proposed in this instance would not be particularly convenient or accessible. On this basis I conclude that the proposal would fail to make adequate provision for waste and refuse facilities and so would be contrary to LP policy 5.17 and CS policy INF3.

Other Matters

14. The Council are concerned that the proposal, for six 1-bedroomed flats, would not provide an adequately mixed form or tenure of housing development, falling short of the 39% family housing proportion that CS policy H1 seeks. Conversely, the appellant notes that the surrounding housing stock, including a number of properties in which the appellant states that he is, or has been, directly involved with are predominantly family housing and that six 1-bedroomed flats would contribute towards providing a mixed local housing stock.
15. However, neither party has provided evidence to support their particular claims. As I have concluded that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, and to the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy and outlook and daylight, I have not considered the nature of the housing mix any further.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons I have set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR