
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2019

by S Dean MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/19/3233228

29-31 Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7TS

- 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 Danish Hanif against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2019/1157, dated 13 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a third floor extension to accommodate 1 x studio flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (i) the character and appearance of the area; and (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to their outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a three-storey building on the corner of Upper Tooting Road and Foulser Road. Like other buildings in a similar position along Upper Tooting Road, the appeal site reduces in scale towards the rear, stepping down towards the residential buildings behind as the corner is turned.
4. The appeal site has already been altered to provide flats to the rear, along Foulser Road. The form of that alteration allows it to maintain the relationship to the houses on Foulser Road in terms of scale. The building is set back at second-floor level, reducing the visual impact of, and apparent size of it from Foulser Road and in longer views along Upper Tooting Road.
5. The proposal would significantly increase the bulk and mass of the appeal property. Currently, the flat-roof is level with the ridge-line of the neighbouring houses, whereas the proposal would be appreciably taller. It would give the impression of an additional storey, which would appear to be taller than the eaves height of the main building. This would be particularly noticeable against, and incongruous with, the height and scale of the houses on Foulser Road.

6. In particular, the lack of any set-back from the existing Foulser Road elevation would increase the apparent mass and scale of the building, particularly in longer views. Whilst there is an existing third-floor flat towards the front of the building, owing to its location within the roof slope and behind the stair-core, it is not readily apparent in the street-scene.
7. The appeal proposal however, would be clearly visible and would appear tall in relation to both the appeal site and the neighbouring properties. I do not consider that the step in from the Foulser Road gable-end is sufficient to replicate the step-down in scale that would be lost to the proposal.
8. The addition of an extension over this existing flat roof would therefore unbalance the existing relationship between the appeal site, its neighbours and the street-scene.
9. The appellant has suggested that as a result of its height, the proposal does not engage with the street-scene so has a neutral impact on it. I disagree. The proposal would be visible within the street-scene, and the effects I have described above would result in an over-dominant appearance at odds with and harmful to the character and appearance of the street-scene. The height of the proposal adds to this effect.
10. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy IS3 of the Wandsworth Local Plan, adopted March 2016 and Policies DMS1 and DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document, adopted March 2016 (the DMPD). These policies seek to ensure development delivers good, high quality design, protects and reinforces existing character, and is sympathetic to the style, scale and appearance of the local area.

Living conditions

11. I have found above that the height, form and scale of the proposal would be unacceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the area. That height, form and scale also causes harm to living conditions.
12. Given the height and orientation of the proposal relative to the residential properties which surround it, particularly the rear of those on Upper Tooting Road, the proposal would cause harm to the living conditions of those occupiers through loss of both light and outlook and through the imposition of an overbearing, over-dominant built-form.
13. The appellant suggests that the proposal is appropriate for a densely developed area such as this. Whilst I accept that in dense, urban areas, levels of light and outlook are often affected by development, that does not override the policy imperative to ensure that development does not cause harm to the amenity of existing occupiers of nearby properties.
14. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy DMS1 of the DMPD which seeks to ensure that development does not harm the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties due to unsatisfactory effects on outlook and light.

Other Matters

15. The appellant has suggested that there is an under-supply within the council area of the type of housing proposed, and that the benefit of providing this outweighs any harm which might otherwise arise. The council disagrees.

16. Whilst I acknowledge the importance of the cumulative contribution of small sites to housing delivery, even if I were to accept the appellant's position on supply, such a benefit would be limited by the scale of the development proposed, so does not outweigh my conclusions on the harmful effects and development plan conflicts set out above.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Dean

INSPECTOR