
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 09 September 2019

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/19/3232199

40 Pinewood Avenue, Uxbridge UB8 3LP

- 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 Singh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 73829/APP/2018/4180, dated 28 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and construction of single dwelling.
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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; and
 - Highway safety, with particular regard to parking provision.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The site is located within a primarily residential area and currently forms part of the garden area for No 40 Pinewood Avenue and is occupied by a single storey detached garage. Whilst there are a mix of designs and dwelling sizes in the surrounding area there is regularity in the streetscene. This comes from the consistent height of buildings, set back from the frontage generally with enclosed front gardens and repetition of building styles.
4. The site provides an important gap in the streetscene, and even with the existing single storey garage, has a spacious open character, providing relief from the built form and contributing positively to the character of the surrounding area.
5. The appeal scheme proposes a two-storey dwelling that would have the same eaves and ridge height as the existing property and extend up to the side boundary of the site. This would fail to achieve the minimum 1m inset as required by Policy BE22 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Unitary Development Plan 1998 saved policies, 2012. (UDP)

6. Whilst the dwelling would not extend beyond the existing front or rear elevations of No.40, and pedestrian access may be available to the rear of the site, the purpose of the required inset is to retain separation between dwellings and avoid terracing impacts. There is an example of the lower ridge and setback having been achieved on a dwelling close to the site on Beechwood Avenue.
7. Although there can be some relaxation to the required inset, this is only where openness would be maintained. A gap does currently exist between the adjacent dwelling at No 42 and the site boundary, though there is nothing to suggest that this property could also not be extended in the future.
8. I therefore attach limited weight to this argument and consider that the lack of an inset from the side boundary at the appeal site, in addition to the overall scale and height of the proposed dwelling, would result in an enclosing effect that would harm the current open and spacious character of the site and surrounding area.
9. The existing semi-detached dwellings have a central gable feature which projects slightly from the main front elevation. This provides a focal point and the semi-detached dwellings have a balanced appearance in the streetscene, though it is noted that the front extension at No 38 has impacted on this to some degree.
10. The proposed dwelling would not be in keeping with the existing dwellings or the prevailing pattern of development in the surrounding area. It would be noticeably smaller in width and the projecting front gable would be a dominant feature, being almost as wide as the dwelling itself. This is not reflective of the design of the host property or those in the vicinity of the site. Rather than creating a seamless terrace of three dwellings it would unbalance and compete visually with the host dwellings and appear as an incongruous addition.
11. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are dwellings opposite which are narrower in width these have been designed as such. They form blocks of four terrace properties with the end dwellings being accessed from the side elevation. Therefore, when viewed within the streetscene they appear as large semi-detached dwellings and their narrow width is not apparent. This would not be the case with the appeal scheme.
12. The proposal includes the provision of parking to the site frontage. It is noted that the current site is predominately hard surfaced though considering the restricted width of the proposed dwelling and limited depth of the site frontage there would appear little opportunity to incorporate any soft landscaping, in addition to the necessary parking space and pedestrian access.
13. Furthermore, I saw on my site visit that achieving the required level of parking would likely necessitate the removal of the existing hedge at No 40. The lack of any soft landscaping, combined with the impact to the current open and spacious character of the site, would overall result in the development having a harsh appearance within the streetscene.
14. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies 2012, which requires all new development to achieve high quality design and make a positive contribution to the local area and, Policies BE13, BE15, BE19 and BE22 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two

– Unitary Development Plan 1998 saved Policies, 2012 which seek to ensure developments harmonise with the streetscene, scale, form, architectural composition and proportions of the original building, incorporating insets from the side boundary and complement or improve the character of the area, as supported by the Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Documents: Residential Extensions 2008 (RE-SPD 2008) and Residential Layouts 2006 (RL-SPD 2006). In addition, the proposal would also fail to achieve the high-quality design requirement of Policy 7.4 of the London Plan 2016.

Highway Safety

15. The proposals would include the provision of three parking spaces to the frontage, two for the existing dwelling and one for the proposed. This level of provision would accord with the Council's parking standards and I note on this basis the Highways officer has not raised any concern.
16. However, as detailed above, the proposals have not fully demonstrated that this level of parking could be achieved whilst providing for a satisfactory standard of appearance for the development, through the provision of soft landscaping.
17. The site is within an area which has a low Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 1b, which is considered poor. Consequently, existing and future occupants are likely to have greater reliance on private vehicles. I saw on my site visit that there are parking restrictions in place along Beechwood Avenue and demand for on-street parking in the vicinity is high.
18. Given the uncertainty as to whether the necessary off-street parking spaces can be achieved in practice, I cannot be certain that the proposal would not lead to an increase in demand for on-street parking to the detriment of highway safety.
19. As it is not clear if sufficient space exists within the site to provide the required level of on-site parking this matter could not be dealt with by condition. Therefore, for the reasons stated the development would be contrary to Policies AM7 and AM14 of the UDP and the guidance within the RE-SPD 2008 and RL-SPD 2006, which seek to ensure that developments accord with the Council's adopted car parking standards and do not prejudice highway or pedestrian safety.

Conclusion

20. I note that the Framework would support the efficient use of land and the proposals would provide an additional dwelling. Whilst I have taken this into account, I do not consider these benefits would be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and taking all other matters in to consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR