The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2019

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/19/3230024
Harold Court, No's 1-8 the Walk, Hornchurch, RM11 3TL

- 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 Leonard Smith against the decision of Havering Borough Council.
- The application Ref P0356.19, dated 28 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2019.
- The development proposed is the construction of new roof level accommodation to provide 4 new dwellings (2 x 1 bed and 2 x studios).

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is set in a predominantly residential area which is typified by large, two-storey, detached and semi-detached houses with hipped roofs.

4. The site lies in The Walk, Hornchurch and consists of a two-storey 1930's apartment building which sits opposite the Europa School for Modern Languages and the Havering Music School.

5. The apartments are shielded to the front by a lawn and five mature trees. The building is set forward from, and separate to, the neighbouring two-storey detached dwellings at 9 & 10 The Walk.

6. The close proximity of the building to Nos 9 & 10 can also be seen to the rear of the block which is accessed via a small side road. The road leads to a large, uncultivated grassed area. There are a number of informal parking spaces and garages surrounding the plot, some of which appeared to be in use at the time of my site inspection.

7. The proposal would add 4 new dwellings (2 No. x 1 bed and 2 no. studios) as part of an additional storey covered by a Mansard style roof. To the front of the property there would be new soft land-scaping and hard-standings for 7 car-parking spaces. An additional 5 car-parking spaces would be provided to the side of the property.

8. The proposed extension would project over the existing side elevations and include dormer windows and roof lights. These additions would significantly add to the overall mass and scale of the building, changing its visual appearance. As a result, it would be it incongruous with the prevailing character of the street-scene.

9. I have noted the presence and visual appearance of a similar apartment block in the area. However, in this specific case, the location of the proposal would be visually dominant relative to adjoining buildings as can be seen from the submitted drawings including the street scene provided by the Appellant.

10. I am reinforced in my view of the incongruent nature of the proposal by the fact that the softening of the front elevation, currently achieved by mature landscaping, would be eroded by the provision of additional hard-surfacing associated with 12 new car-parking spaces to the front and side of the building.

11. The proposal is therefore, contrary to policy DC61 of the London Borough of Havering Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2008) (LBHCS) which states, amongst other things, that development should respond to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development and respect the scale, massing and height of the surrounding physical context, and does not prejudice the environment or the occupiers of adjacent properties.

12. The main parties agree that the council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and as such, paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework and paragraph 3.13 of the London Plan (2016) are engaged. However, I find the adverse impacts of the proposal, including harm to character and appearance, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits including the contribution to housing land supply.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR