



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2019

by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/19/3235149

34 Queens Road, Ware SG12 7DN

- 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 Mrs K Hopson against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/19/0933/FUL, dated 2 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing single storey w.c./store and erection of two storey building consisting of 2no. one bedroom apartments with 2no. parking spaces, vehicle entrances and crossovers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The site has been subject to a recent appeal decision¹ for an identical development issued after the registration of this appeal. Whilst the outcome of that appeal is noted, this appeal is considered on its own merits.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. Queens Road forms part of a wider estate of primarily residential development. It consists of a loop road with an access arm from Cromwell Road to the east, and from the Fanhams Road / King George Road roundabout to the west. The road is characterised by a planned mix of post-war semi-detached and terraced dwellings set behind front gardens with private amenity spaces to the rear.
5. The house types within this part of the estate have a high degree of uniformity that, despite designed variations in elevation treatments and some examples of hipped roof building designs, have similar detailing, generally consistent proportioning and common roof materials and heights. The buildings and layout about the loop have a high degree of symmetry and sense of space between adjacent blocks of development.
6. Nos 34 and 36 Queens Road form a pair of semi-detached properties located on the inner side of the road, facing the access arm to the east. Here the pair are isolated in their orientation and provide a strong central focal point on the

¹ APP/J1915/W/19/3231522

approach from Cromwell Road. The prominence of the buildings is emphasised by a positive sense of spaciousness to either side arising from the wide side gardens and lower garage blocks on the return arms of the road. The vista on approach has a strong sense of symmetry being framed by the rows of dwellings either side of the loop road.

7. The proposed development would introduce a significant scale of development to the side garden that would extend uncharacteristically close to the back of the pavement at its front corner. The building would substantially reduce the open nature of this part of the estate and unbalance the existing symmetry to the detriment of the character and appearance of this prominent element of the street scene. This would be particularly evident in the loss of the central alignment of development with the access road.
8. The effect would be made more conspicuous by virtue of the greater width of the proposed building in comparison to the adjoining units and the contrary arrangement of openings to the front elevation. These aspects of the proposal would result in an unbalanced appearance that would fail to reflect the consistency of proportioning and uniformity of buildings which are strong characteristics of development in the locality. Notwithstanding the proposal to utilise matching materials, the development would subsequently appear unsympathetic and incongruous.
9. It is suggested by the appellant that the existing building could be extended under permitted development rights thereby resulting in a loss of the current level of symmetry across the semi pair. However, I have seen nothing to suggest that if this were possible, the appellant would genuinely pursue this option if the appeal failed. As such, it is a matter of negligible weight in the determination of this appeal.
10. I note the concerns of the Council that the proposed development would result in a terracing effect. As a proposal to form additional residential units alongside the existing semis, I consider that this is the intended outcome. Given there are other terrace units within the loop road, the principle of this type of development is already established. Furthermore, due to the isolated position of nos 34 and 36, the proposed building would not encroach so close to other two-storey development as to result in any perception of wider terracing impacts.
11. Although the proposed development is an additive form of development, it would result in new residential units independent of the occupation of the existing dwelling at no 34. Therefore, I find there is little justification within the Council's evidence to require it to appear subordinate to the adjacent development or avoid a terraced appearance.
12. The appellant submits that the development would make the best possible use of the side garden area and respond to the site constraints in an area outside of special planning controls. Whilst these are positive aspects of the proposed development, they would not outweigh the harm I have identified in terms of the effect of development on the character and appearance of the locality.
13. For the above reasons, I consider the proposed development would conflict with Policies DES4 and HOU11 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 which, amongst other things, seek to protect the character and appearance of local development.

Conclusion

14. Whilst I have found in favour of the appellant with regard to the terracing effect of the proposed development, I do not consider this would outweigh the identified harm in relation to its effect on the character and appearance of the locality. I therefore conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR