The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2019

by I A Dyer BSc (Eng) MIHT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/W/19/3235678
Land adjacent to 14 Cicely Rd, Peckham, London SE15 5HW

- 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 Percy Weston against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
- The application Ref 19/AP/0082, dated 10 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 March 2019
- The development proposed is described as "Revised scheme for 3 storey 3 bedroom new build house. The site already has consent for a 2/3 storey 3 bedroom house (app no: 18/AP/3067)".

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. During the course of the planning application, the appellant amended the plans in response to comments from the Council's design and conservation team. I have considered the proposal on the basis of the amended plans.

3. The address provided on the application form was limited and lacked a postcode. I have therefore used the address provided on the decision notice to provide clarity.

4. The Draft London Plan has been published but has yet to be examined and found sound and so attracts limited weight as a material consideration.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is an undeveloped plot of land situated at the end of a short terrace of two storey dwellings at the southern end of Cicely Road. The site shares a boundary with 14 Cicely Road. The other boundaries face onto Cicely Road, Moncrieff Street and William Margie Close.

7. The dwellings immediately surrounding the site are brick two storey terraced houses with pitched roofs. To the north of Moncrieff Street these are of a modern design, whilst those to the south are older with traditional detailing. On the corner of Cicely Road and Moncrieff Street, opposite the site is a

commercial development known as Peckham Levels, which is constructed of a concrete frame with substantial areas of brick infilling.

8. The site benefits from an extant permission, Council Ref 18/AP/3067 (the 2018 permission) for a part two storey, part three storey dwelling house with a roof terrace.

9. The proposed dwelling would include a sizeable aluminium clad rotunda at third storey level which would be prominent in views along Cicely Road, Moncrief Street and William Margie Close. Although of a metallic finish, which may, to a degree, diminish the perception of the mass of the rotunda, the overall scale and massing of this element would dominate the end of the terrace, appearing as a much taller structure than those to which it immediately relates. Whilst there are taller buildings in the vicinity, this new dwelling would relate principally to the nearby terraces, and the increase in height on the inside of the corner would appear in isolation and create a disparity in the rhythm of the terrace heights.

10. Although there are three storey dwellings fronting Cicely Road to the north of the site, these form a substantial terrace from which the terrace adjacent to the site steps down. Although the terrace on the south side of Moncrieff Street is slightly taller than that at the southern end of Cicely Road, the positioning of a single taller building at the end of the two storey terrace would be out of keeping with the rhythm created by the terraces.

11. Further, the use of concrete as the predominant material, albeit with pigmentation and stratification, would be disparate from the materials and detailing of its neighbours. This would be emphasised by the angular shape of the building to second floor level, producing a projection beyond the roof slopes of the terrace of which it would form part.

12. This disparity in design, emphasised by the choice of materials, would be so out-of-keeping with the nearby dwellings as to constitute material harm to the character and appearance of the area.

13. Although Peckham Levels, on the outside of the bend, is a much taller building, than that which is proposed, it appears as an anomalous intrusion into the streetscape of the area, emphasising the lower, less bulky character of the residential development. The massing of the proposed building would extend this intrusion further into the residential development.

14. Whilst the site already has planning permission for a dwelling of similar overall height, the massing of the third floor within the proposal before me would be substantially greater than that of the 2018 permission, even following the amendments made to the scheme during the course of the application.

15. In particular instances, buildings that are taller than their neighbours can enhance an area, particularly on prominent corner locations. However, I have considered the proposal in regard to its particular surroundings and find that, in this particular case, the combination of height, massing and materials is at odds with the neighbouring development to which it would relate.

16. My attention has been drawn to other development in the area that the appellant considers provide examples of where design approaches similar to those of the scheme before me have been successful. I have limited information before me upon which to determine the degree to which these

examples are contextually similar to the scheme before me and I have, in any case, determined this appeal on its own merits.

17. I conclude that the proposal would result in material harm to the character and appearance of the area. It is therefore contrary to Policy 25 of the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan (2014), Strategic Policy 12 of the Southwark Council Core Strategy (2011), saved policies 3.12 and 3.13 of the Southwark Plan (2007) which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development uses materials and features that reflect the identity of the local surroundings, is of an appropriate design to the local context and does not dominate its surroundings inappropriately in terms of height and design. Similarly, the proposal would be contrary to the aims of Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework), which seek, amongst other things, to achieve well designed places that are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

18. The room sizes and the level of provision of outdoor amenity space meet and exceed the requirements of the Council, and the main parties are agreed that the development would respect the amenity of neighbours. This lack of harm does not weigh either in favour of, or against, the development.

19. I note the expressions of support from architects supporting the innovative design approach of the scheme. Whilst the Framework supports innovation in design, this is only one strand of the overall approach to achieving well-designed places. I am mindful of the need identified in the Framework to achieve places which are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment, and it will be seen from my reasoning above that I do not find that the proposal would achieve that aim.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

I Dyer

INSPECTOR