
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2019

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/19/3233136

11 Cornwall Court, Cornwall Road, Pinner HA5 4LR

- 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 Regis Group PLC against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/0552/19, dated 5 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is two rear dormers and two front dormers to create two x two bedroom flats in the roof.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have determined the appeal on the basis of the description of development from the Council's decision notice (and the appellant's appeal form) which describes the proposal more clearly and succinctly than that used on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located on Cornwall Road, close to the centre of Hatch End. Cornwall Road is predominately residential in character with a mixture of flats and traditional detached houses. Immediately adjacent to the appeal property is a vehicle servicing centre.
5. 11 Cornwall Court is the first in a row of three-storey blocks of flats along this side of the street. The road is relatively narrow and the flats, which are set back behind front gardens with mature trees, provide a sense of enclosure. The blocks of flats differ from each other in materials and design but are of a similar age and style. The length of the buildings, combined with their shallow roof pitches and fenestration, gives a strong horizontal emphasis to their design. The simple design, consistent scale and repeating roof form of the flats plays a significant role in defining the character of the street.
6. The appeal property has alternating vertical bands of red brick and cream colour render, which provides interest in the design and breaks up the long

- front and rear elevations. The proposed front dormers would be sited above the two main entrances and would continue the existing banding of the building with matching windows and materials. Whilst the dormers would accentuate the vertical element of the building's design, they would fail to respect its primarily horizontal character. This would result in the building appearing unbalanced and out of character with its neighbours.
7. The proposed front dormers would be set in from the ridge and eaves, but due to the shallow roof pitch, they would predominately be seen against the sky rather than being viewed within the profile of the roof. As a result, they would not appear as subordinate features in the roof. Instead, they would be a prominent addition which, despite the trees along the road frontage, would be clearly visible from Cornwall Road and Devonshire Road. Due to their height and depth the dormers would appear overly large and would detract from, rather than enhancing, the character of both the building and the wider area.
 8. The back of Cornwall Court is not visible from the public domain and the proposed rear dormers would only be seen in profile when travelling from Hatch End centre along Cornwall Road. The dormers would be set in from the side gables, eaves and ridge which would help to limit their visual impact. The effect of the rear dormers on the character of the area would be acceptable.
 9. The proposal would involve raising the roof height by a limited amount, creating a slightly steeper pitch to allow front and rear dormers to be added. In the context of the building as a whole, these alterations would be minor and would be acceptable in relation to the host property and the wider street scene.
 10. I note the emphasis in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on making effective use of land; supporting the development of under-utilised land and buildings; taking opportunities to use airspace above existing buildings to provide new homes; avoiding low densities and making optimal use of the potential of sites¹. However, the proposed development would not be consistent with the prevailing form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene as paragraph 118 requires. The plot is currently in residential use and provides outdoor amenity space and parking. I do not agree with the appellant's view that it is underutilised, or that the proposed development is necessary to optimise the potential of the site.
 11. I acknowledge the requirement for housing in the area and agree that there would be a modest social benefit in terms of additional housing, which would contribute to providing a range of housing types in the area. The proposal would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupiers, without causing harm to neighbouring residents.
 12. The proposed development would be sustainably located with good access to local services and facilities by a range of transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport, with an appropriate level of parking on site. I note that there are no environmental designations affecting the site; the risk of flooding would be low; the existing landscaping and protected trees would be maintained and that impacts on the highway would be acceptable. There would be modest economic benefits to the local economy during construction and through residents' use of amenities and services.

¹ Framework paragraphs 117, 118 and 123

13. The appellant has referred to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the Framework. In this case, whilst the proposal has modest economic and social benefits, it does not meet the environmental objective due to its failure to protect and enhance the built environment.
14. The appellant has drawn my attention to nearby Dunford Court which has front and rear dormers. However, the building is very different to the appeal property, with a much larger and steeper roof plane, and the dormers are of a different design. In any event, I have assessed the proposal on its own merits and the existence of the dormers at Dunford Court does not justify the proposed harmful development.
15. I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016 which require that development has regard to local character and is of the highest architectural quality; Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012, concerned with the protection of local character, and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013 relating to with the design and layout of proposals. It also conflicts with the detailed advice contained in the Residential Design Guide SPD 2010.

Conclusion

16. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and, for this reason, the appeal should be dismissed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR