



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2020

by D Hilton-Brown BSc (Hons) CIEEM

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/19/3242569

18a and 18b Plantagenet Road, New Barnet, Barnet EN5 5JG

- 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 KCH Contractors Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/4596/FUL, dated 16 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 November 2019.
 - The development proposed are the alterations to Nos 18a and 18b to convert the existing property from 2no to 3no flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - (a) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area and;
 - (b) whether or not the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupants, with respect to the internal floor space and built-in storage within the proposed second floor flat.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is situated on the eastern side of Plantagenet Road, which consists of a mix of buildings of residential and commercial use. These range from 2 to 3-storey properties with no specific dominant character type.
4. The properties starting from No 20a Plantagenet Road increase in height gradually, as they follow the incline of the road in a southerly direction. This gradual increase in height is particularly noticeable when looking up the hill from the northern end of Plantagenet Road.
5. The neighbouring property at No 18 has been designed to retain this incremental increase in height. The hipped roof section of No 18, opposite the appeal properties, is 2-storeys in height to match the existing design of Nos 18a and 18b. It then steps up to the 3-storey gable end, which complements the 3-storey block of flats known as Brittany Court.

6. The conversion of these appeal properties would involve the construction of an additional storey onto the existing host properties. Despite the building line and footprint of the properties remaining unchanged, there would be an increase in ridge height of approximately 2m. The resultant 3-storey building would disrupt this incremental increase in height, as it would dominate No 20a, a 2-storey dwelling, and would be only slightly below the ridge height of No 18.
7. In addition, the eaves of the proposed development would be above the eaves of the hipped roof of No 18. This would emphasise the 3-storey nature of this proposed development in relation to the 2-storey hipped roof of No 18. Hence, this would disrupt the rhythm of the roofscapes and unbalance the streetscene in this locality.
8. The proposed linear extension to the front porch would extend to almost the full height of the building and have an off-centre position on the front elevation. This would create an extremely prominent feature which would give the host properties an unbalanced appearance. The local area has a variety of building forms and styles; however, no other front projections were visible in the immediate vicinity. Despite the use of sympathetic materials to match the host building, the proposed development's height, front projection and unbalanced appearance would lead to a discordant appearance within the streetscene of the immediate vicinity.
9. The proposed conversion would also create 3 dormer windows to the rear of the properties. In combination, these structures would be more than half the width of the roof slope, which would dominate the host properties and give a top-heavy appearance to the rear elevation. The proposed pitched roofs would fail to be visually contained within the appeal properties' roofslope. Therefore, the proposed dormers would fail to accord with the recommendations set out within the Barnet London Borough Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance, 2016 (SPD).
10. The proposed dormers would not be visible from Plantagenet Road. However, these new prominent and incongruous additions would be visible to the occupiers of some of the properties to the rear on Bulwer Gardens.
11. The appellants have drawn my attention to other approved developments on Plantagenet Road and to the effect they have had on the character of the locality. However, I am not aware of the full planning history of these developments and I must determine this appeal on its individual planning merits. The presence of these other developments does not represent an appropriate reason to find in favour of a proposal that would cause the harm I have already identified.
12. Therefore, the development would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host properties and the surrounding area. This would fail to accord with policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan, Core Strategy, Development Plan Document, 2012 (the CS), and policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan, Development Management Policies, Development Plan Document, 2012 (the DPD). It would also not comply with the guidance in the Barnet London Borough Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document, Residential Design Guidance, 2016 (SPD). Together these require a high standard of urban design which respects the character of the local area.

Living conditions

13. The proposed second floor plan (Proposal 13815-P002-C) describes the second floor flat as a 1 bed 1 person unit. The bedroom would be approximately 2.98m by 4.40m in size, with a ceiling height of at least 2.3m over 75% of the dwelling area. Consequently, it would easily accommodate a double bed or 2 single beds and therefore could be regarded as a double or twin bedroom. In addition, this proposed unit would have a larger bedroom than that proposed for the first floor flat, which is described as a 1 bed 2 person unit. I therefore consider that the proposed second floor flat could be used as a 2 person 1 bed unit.
14. Therefore, irrespective of whether it is a studio flat or 1 bed apartment, the proposed second floor unit should have a Gross Internal Area of 50m² and built-in storage of 1.5m² to comply with the minimum space standards, as set out in the London Plan, The Spatial Development Strategy For London Consolidated With Alterations Since 2011, (2016) (the London Plan).
15. Therefore, the development would not provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupants, with respect to the internal floor space and built in storage within the proposed second floor flat. Consequently, the proposal fails to accord with policies 3.5 of the London Plan, CS5 of the CS, policy DM02 of the DPD. The development would also fail to comply with the Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document, 2016 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD. These require development to have a high standard of internal design and to provide adequate space for future occupiers.

Conclusion

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

D Hilton-Brown

INSPECTOR