
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2020

by Peter Mark Sturgess BSc (Hons), MBA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Decision date: Tuesday, 12 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/19/3242462
64 St. Georges Road, Feltham TW13 6RE

- 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 Ray Roberts against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00977/A/P6, dated 1 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is construction of 2no two bedroom semi detached properties following demolition of existing unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the locality, its effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy and outlook and the effect on the living conditions of future occupiers in terms of amenity space.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The development plan includes the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (volume one) (HLP). The HLP seeks through policies CC1 – Context and Character and CC2 – Urban Design and Architecture, amongst other things, to secure development that sensitively and creatively responds to the area's character and integrates well with its surroundings.
4. The appeal proposal lies at the eastern end of St. George's Road and faces down the road towards Bear Road. Unlike other houses in the road its front elevations would be visible for a considerable distance and would be a prominent feature in the street scene. The predominant building type around the appeal site is 2 storey, with some roof extensions. The appeal proposal would be 1.5 stories high and therefore significantly different in height, massing and appearance to the majority of houses in the road. The houses along St. George's Road have small front gardens with their principal garden area to the rear, whereas the appeal proposal would have all of the private amenity space to the front with only a narrow access way to the rear. This would mean that domestic paraphernalia, such as garden furniture and

children's play equipment would be readily visible from public areas which could harm the character and appearance of the locality.

5. I have had regard to the presence and location of the existing single storey workshop/garage currently on the site. However, this is a low building and has no visibility in the wider street scene. The proposed houses would be considerably taller and, together with their amenity areas, would be prominent in long views, when approaching the site from St. George's Road/Bear Road.
6. I consider that the appeal proposal is in conflict with policies CC1 and CC2 of the HLP. The appeal proposal would not make the most of opportunities to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the area nor would it sensitively and creatively respond to the area's character. It would appear as an incongruous feature, a 1.5 storey dwelling set amongst 2 and 2.5 storey dwellings, when viewed from St Georges Road and the approach to the site from Bear Road. The principal garden areas, being located to the front of the proposed dwellings are not characteristic of the area and would further add to the incongruous nature of this proposal. In these respects, it would fail to respond sensitively to the site, its characteristics and constraints, nor integrate with its surroundings through its layout, height and massing as required by the policies of the development plan.

Living Conditions – Nearby Dwellings

7. To the rear of the appeal site lies the gardens of 11 and 12 The Cygnets. The rear wall of the appeal proposal would be around 1m from the boundary of these gardens. The rear dormers, serving the bedrooms, on the appeal proposal would be less than 2m from these gardens. The rear windows of 11 and 12 the Cygnets are approximately 15m from the rear dormer windows of the appeal property. There would be direct overlooking from the appeal proposals into the rear gardens of the properties on The Cygnets and, potentially, given the separation distances, into the dwellings themselves. The close proximity of these windows to the boundary between the properties would lead to a substantial loss of privacy for the occupiers of 11 and 12 The Cygnets within their rear garden and potentially within the rear rooms of their dwellings. These impacts would significantly diminish the living conditions for the occupiers of 11 and 12 The Cygnets by reason of overlooking and the overbearing relationship created by the rear wall, large roof and first floor dormer windows in the appeal proposal in close proximity to their boundary with the appeal site.
8. The development plan at Policy CC2 seeks to ensure that new dwellings function well in themselves and in their effect on the surrounding area and have a positive impact on the amenity of current and future residents. Overall, I consider that the appeal proposal is in conflict with Policy CC2. It would not have a positive impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of 11 and 12 The Cygnets as it would fail to provide adequate levels of privacy, not minimise direct overlooking and create an overbearing relationship on their boundary with the appeal site.

Living Conditions – Future Occupiers

9. The gardens of the appeal proposal would lie in front of the dwellings between their front wall and the edge of St. George's Road. They would be directly overlooked by the dwellings at 62 and 64 St. George's Road. This would mean

the proposed dwellings would have no usable private external garden space. The area available for each dwelling would also be below the area specified for dwellings of this size in the HLP. I note that the appellant has questioned the way the Council has calculated the size of the garden space required for each dwelling. However, irrespective of the actual size of garden space available for each dwelling I find that the space is unacceptable as it is not private and usable space as required by the HLP, as it is directly overlooked by first floor windows at No 62 and No 64.

10. Policy SC5 of the HLP specifically expects developments to provide private external amenity space that is usable and affords privacy and security for the occupiers of the new dwellings. The external amenity space provided in the appeal proposal is neither private nor usable as it lies to the front of the properties and is overlooked by adjacent dwellings. The appeal proposal is therefore in conflict with Policy SC5 of the HLP.
11. I note that the reasons for refusal used by the Council refer to Policy 3.5 of the LP. However, the officer's report on the planning application acknowledges that the internal space standards which would be provided by the appeal dwellings would comply with the standards set out in this part of the development plan.

Other Matters

12. Reference has been made by the appellant about the contribution the appeal proposal could make to the supply of houses in the Borough. I acknowledge that the supply of suitable sites for housing can be a material consideration. I regard the harm the proposal would do to the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of the adjacent occupiers and the living conditions of the future occupiers of the proposed dwellings sufficient to outweigh any benefits the proposal might have in terms of increasing the supply of houses in the Borough.

Conclusion

13. I find that having regard to all matters before me, including the provisions of the development plan, when taken as a whole, the appeal should be dismissed.

Peter Mark Sturgess

INSPECTOR