
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2020

by Adrian Hunter BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3244838

1 Gould Road, Feltham TW14 8AB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Tamjit Grewal against the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref P/2019/3653, is dated 7 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of an existing 4 bedroom detached residential property and single storey attached garage. To be replaced with a purpose built block of 8No. flats, 4 x studio flats, 2 x 1 bedroom flats & 2 x 2 bedroom flats. To also include external shared and private amenity spaces, shared bin store, tenant parking and external covered bike storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Tamjit Grewal against London Borough of Hounslow. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. Following the submission of the appeal against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period, the Council have clarified the position they would have taken had they determined the application. I have had regard to these submissions, in so far as they provide clarity in terms of the reasons why the Council would have refused planning permission had it done so. The main issues below are therefore informed by the Council's submissions.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area; and
 - The effect of the proposal upon the living conditions of surrounding and future residents.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site includes a two-storey detached dwelling set within a reasonably sized plot. Off-street parking is provided by an adjoining garage. The surrounding area is residential in character with the dwellings along Gould Road comprising predominantly semi-detached or detached properties. Buildings are a mix of architectural style, reflecting their age and design. Immediately adjoining the site, to the south-east, is a detached bungalow. To the north-west, facing Staines Road are a number of commercial properties, with the rear outbuildings of these properties running up to the north-western boundary of the appeal site.
6. The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing building and its replacement with a two-storey block of flats. Communal areas would be provided to the rear of the building, along with the provision of two disabled car parking spaces, accessed via a new opening along the south-eastern boundary of the site.
7. The proposed new building would be substantially larger in terms of its footprint and floor area than the existing appeal building. Whilst the overall height of the proposed building would not exceed the height of the existing building by a significant amount, due to the crown roof design and the significant increase in height to the building soffits, the new building would appear substantially larger than the existing. Due to this, and when combined with the significant two-storey rear extension, the building would have a larger expanse of roof and, would be of a considerably greater scale, bulk and massing than the property to be demolished.
8. This additional height, bulk and mass, when viewed within the context of the existing dwellings along the street, would disrupt the existing pattern of development. It would introduce a form of development that would discordantly rise above the adjoining dwelling and, due to its substantial footprint, would appear cramped, indicative of overdevelopment. As a result, the proposal would introduce a form of development that would appear out of scale with and harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
9. For the above reasons, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and, in this respect, would be contrary to Policies CC1 and CC2 of the Local Plan 2015-2030 and Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies, amongst other things, seek to secure development that sensitively and creatively responds to an area's character.

Living conditions

10. No windows are proposed in the flank wall of the property that would face towards 3 Gould Road. However, a first-floor private balcony would be positioned in close proximity to the boundary. Due to its height, it would face directly onto the garden of the adjoining property. This balcony has however been designed with a high-level screen to protect the privacy of No 3 and the occupier of the proposed unit. The delivery of such a screen could be controlled through the use of a suitably worded planning condition.

11. When compared with the existing building, the proposed development would extend deeper into the appeal site. However, the appeal plot is reasonably large, and the design and position of the building would be such that it would be off-set from the boundary. As a result, the proposal would not represent a significant visual intrusion or have an overbearing effect upon the neighbouring dwelling. Consequently, the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of residents of No 3.
12. Internally, the proposed dwellings would provide sufficient internal floorspace to meet the National Described Space Standards (NDSS). Furthermore, I note from the drawings that none of the proposed flats would be single aspect. In terms of amenity space, the ground floor units have access to private garden space, with all 1st floor flats having private balconies. The proposed studio flats in the roof space are not provided with any amenity space. They do however have access to the communal garden area to the rear of the appeal site. Whilst this area is not directly accessible from the flats, it is not an uncommon situation with urban developments. Therefore, whilst the provision of amenity space is not ideal, on its own, it would not be sufficient to justify the withholding of planning permission.
13. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of surrounding residents and future occupants of the development and, in this respect accords with Policies SC5 and CC2 of the Local Plan and paragraph 127 of the Framework. These policies, amongst other things, seek to create sufficiently high-quality living conditions.

Other Matters

14. My attention has been drawn to other considerations which weigh in favour of the proposal. These include the acceptability of the proposal in relation to highway matters and the provision of new dwellings to support the Council's housing targets. The appellant also points out that the site is a brownfield site, within an accessible and sustainable location. I have taken these points into account; however, they do not outweigh the harm I have found in respect of the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

15. I have found that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of surrounding or future residents. However, I have found that the proposed scheme would harm the character and appearance of the area. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Adrian Hunter

INSPECTOR