



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2020

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/20/3255516

Olympia House, Armitage Road, Golders Green NW11 8RQ

- 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 A Matsukis against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 20/1619/FUL, dated 24 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is extension to existing third and fourth floors of an existing office building to accommodate additional office space. Extension and alterations to ground floor lobby.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for extension to existing third and fourth floors of an existing office building to accommodate additional office space. Extension and alterations to ground floor lobby at Olympia House, Armitage Road, Golders Green NW11 8RQ, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 20/1619/FUL, dated 24 March 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan, OH-PP7-01, OH-PP7-02, OH-PP7-03 REV A, OH-PP7-04 REV A and OH-PP7-05 REV A.
 - 3) Construction works associated with the development hereby permitted shall take place only between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm on Monday to Friday, 8.00 am and 1.00 pm on Saturdays, and shall not take place at any time on Sundays or on Bank or Public Holidays.
 - 4) Prior to the extensions over the third and fourth floors hereby permitted being brought into use, any glazing along the proposed side (west) elevation, as shown on drawing: OH-PP7-04 REV A shall be obscure glazed. Thereafter the obscure glazing shall be retained for the life of the development.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are a) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the Golders Green Town Centre Conservation Area ('CA'); and, b) the effect of the proposed extension over the fourth floor on the living conditions of neighbours in respect of outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a sizeable, part three and part four storey, modern detached office building. Despite its scale, it is largely screened in views from Golders Green Road (north) and The Riding (west) by built development in a range of scales and styles. It is also afforded a degree of separation from dwellings along Woodstock Road by intervening gardens and only presents a limited frontage along Armitage Road. Consequently, this building is settled within the area and contributes to its varied townscape. Furthermore, the extent of its scale and prominence are only apparent from limited vantage points, this includes the rear of properties along Woodstock Road and from along parts of Armitage Road and Accommodation Road, both of which also form part of the adjacent Golders Green Town Centre CA. The CA is largely centred along the quality architecture of the town centre.
4. Occupying a modest footprint, the proposed extension over the third floor would be viewed in the context of the taller parts of the host building. While the new extension over the fourth floor would add an additional storey to the host building, this would only occupy part of its roof. Moreover, both extensions would have simple forms with flat roofs and are to be recessed from the existing facades of the building. The appearance of the proposed extensions would broadly reflect those previously approved at the host building.
5. Consequently, although the proposed extensions would increase the overall scale and height of the host building, these appropriately designed and subservient additions would complement the existing building. As such, mindful of the impact of what is there now, I consider that they would not have any adverse effect on the area.
6. Furthermore, to facilitate the aforementioned extensions, the existing telecommunications equipment on the roof of the host building would have to be removed, and although not decisive in my reasoning, the removal of these and the visual clutter associated with them, would improve the appearance of the building.
7. The proposed alterations to the ground floor lobby are modest in scale and consistent with the overall design of the existing building.
8. For the above reasons, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, there would also be no harm to the setting of the Golders Green Town Centre CA. I therefore find no conflict with Policies DM01 of the Development Management Policies (Adopted) 2012 ('DMP') which along with other matters requires that development proposals should be based on an understanding of local characteristics and preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets. I also find no conflict with DMP Policy DM06 which requires that all development will have regard to the local historic context, including heritage assets.

Living conditions

9. The proposed extension over the fourth floor would be visible from dwellings along Woodstock Road. Nevertheless, given the degree of separation achieved and its subservient scale, this extension would not appear unduly dominant in

views from these properties and their respective gardens, particularly in the context of the existing building. Therefore, this extension would not unacceptably harm the living conditions of neighbours, in respect of outlook. As such, I find no conflict with Policy DM01 of the DMP, which along with other things requires that development proposals should be designed to allow for adequate outlook for adjoining users.

Other Matters

10. Matters relating to the need for additional office space, the adequacy of existing parking provision and concerns over the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbours in respect of overlooking and daylight were addressed in detail in the Council's report and I have no clear reasons to conclude otherwise.
11. Although third parties have questioned whether the existing telecommunications equipment would be reinstated on the host building, there is nothing in the evidence before me to suggest this. In any event, this, and concerns about the future conversion of the appeal property to flats are matters separate from this appeal.

Conditions

12. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council in light of the requirements of the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') and the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition to the standard timescale condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the approved drawings as this provides certainty.
13. In the interests of safeguarding the living conditions of neighbours it is necessary to specify conditions limiting the days and times when construction activity in association with the proposal can be undertaken, and requiring the provision and retention of obscure glazing along parts of the proposed extensions.
14. The Council has requested a condition removing permitted development rights for other uses at the appeal property. However, the PPG advises that conditions restricting the future use of permitted development rights should only be used in exceptional circumstances. As no exceptional circumstances have been identified in this case, such a condition is not necessary.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR