
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2021

by D Hartley BA (Hons) MTP MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/20/3259716

Walsingham House, 1331 High Road, Whetstone, London N20 9HR

- 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 T Gross (Walsingham Ltd) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 20/2946/FUL, dated 30 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as "Rear, side and roof extensions to improve living standards to 2no. existing flats and to create 2no. additional flats within roof space, including additional rear balconies and communal amenity area, 1no. additional parking space, and associated cycle and refuse storage".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building forms part of a characterful brick built terrace of properties where overall there is a general design consistency and symmetry across the properties with reference to height, window sizes/designs and the position and shape of the roofs. Whilst there is a variety of styles of buildings in this vibrant town centre location, there is nevertheless a consistency to the height of properties along High Road in so far that they are either two or three storeys. This, coupled with the presence of mature trees within the wide pavements, adds positively and distinctively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The proposal is to erect an additional floor on top of the building, albeit set back from the front of the building by about 10 metres. The additional floor would be positioned over the existing rear outrigger to the building and would also include an extension over part of the main roof including an increase in height to the southern flank elevation. The proposal would increase the number of flats on the site from 15 to 17 and would also include an additional car parking space, communal amenity space at roof level and balconies to the rear elevation of the flats with 1.8 metre high glass screens.
5. I acknowledge that in terms of those that would be close to the appeal building, such as on the nearest pavement on High Road, the roof extension

would not be conspicuous owing to its set back from the front elevation. Nonetheless, the increase in the height of the appeal building would be very apparent when viewed from parts of the other side of High Road where the side elevation and roof of the building is conspicuous. In this context, it would be seen in stark contrast to the prevailing height of most of the other properties in the area. Therefore, it would appear discordant in the street-scene.

6. Furthermore, the additional bulk and height of the development would be particularly noticeable to those on High Road approaching the side elevation close to Waitrose. From this area, the development would appear bulky and dominant and would materially detract from the scale of other buildings in this locality. Overall, I do not therefore consider that the proposal would assimilate well into the wider urban landscape when viewed by passers-by.
7. The above harm would be compounded by the fact that it is proposed to include a number of balconies on the rear elevation. Whilst the rear of the building is not as visible as the front from public vantage points, the inclusion of balconies would not be reflective of the rest of building. Furthermore, when viewed from the rear gardens of the dwellings on St Margarets Avenue this would have the effect of drawing more attention to development which would dominate the rear of the building when appreciated within the wider terrace. Whilst views to the rear would be mainly from private residences and the car park, this in itself does not obviate the need to achieve good design.
8. In reaching the views above, I have taken into account the planning permission¹ to convert and extend No 1323 High Road which is close to the appeal site. I acknowledge that this approval would permit a marginal increase in the height of such a building relative to the height of the neighbouring Waitrose building. However, owing to the narrow width of this approved building and the set-back of the upper floors from the front elevation, this height change would not be as apparent to the passer-by when compared to the appeal proposal. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its individual planning merits and taking into account the prevailing distinctive and positive characteristics of the locality as a whole as described above.
9. For the collective reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the terrace and the area. Consequently, the development would not accord with the design requirements of policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Core Strategy DPD 2012; policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) DPD 2012 and the Council's Residential Design Guidance SPD 2016.

Other Matters

10. The proposal would boost the supply of homes in the area, would make efficient use of land and there would be some economic benefits associated with additional residents on the site in respect of construction employment and from supporting local services and facilities. However, the social contribution from an additional two flats would not be significant in the context that there is no evidence to indicate that the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing sites. Similarly, economic benefits would be relatively limited given the number of residential units proposed.

¹ Planning permission Ref No APP/N5090/W/18/3194922

11. I do accept that the proposal would include the provision of new communal amenity space, as well as some balcony space for existing and proposed occupants of the flats. Both the amenity spaces, and the inclusion of photovoltaic panels on the roof, are matters which weigh positively in favour of allowing the appeal.
12. Notwithstanding the above benefits, the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area would be significant. This is a matter of overriding concern and therefore the other matters raised do not alter or outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

13. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

D Hartley

INSPECTOR