
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2021

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/20/3259786

Rear of Nos. 252 and 254 East Barnet Road, Barnet, London EN4 8TF

- 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 Tasos Alecou against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 19/5611/FUL, dated 23 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing double garages. Erection of two storey dwellinghouse, including off street parking, refuse and recycle store, cycle store and associated amenity space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the Council's description of the development in reaching my decision as it more fully describes the details of the development than that given on the original planning application form. The appellant's appeal form also makes reference to the updated description.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises of a detached block of double garages and the small enclosed garden areas at the rear of a pair of two storey commercial terraced properties with residential uses above at the junction of East Barnet Road and Middle Road. The brick gable end of a traditional two storey residential property at No. 1 Middle Road is located immediately to the south of the site.
5. The immediate area is mixed in character. Middle Road is a mature well-established residential street, typically characterised by traditional two storey terraced and semi-detached properties set back from the road, of comparable scale and form, with distinctive ground floor front bay windows and traditional gabled tiled roofs. Although the style and design of the properties along East Barnet Road are more varied in nature, those along the southern side of the road comprise of a dense mix of traditional two-storey commercial and

residential properties set in narrow plots with two storey outriggers at the rear. Where garages and other structures exist behind properties, these are very low, clearly subsidiary, and have little impact upon the sense of space and openness, including the open hardstanding area used for car parking at the rear of the corner property directly opposite the site. Nos. 252 and 254 East Barnet Road being situated on a corner plot have more expansive grounds, which add to the open character and appearance of the area.

6. The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing garages and the construction of a two storey detached dwelling with associated parking and amenity space. The proposed dwelling would be set back in line with the adjacent semi-detached properties and stepped down to utilise the natural sloping topography of the site and surroundings. The external finish of the building would be predominantly yellow brickwork and render with a ground floor front bay window and pitched tiled gabled roof.
7. Whilst visually the design of the proposed dwelling would be acceptable, the scale and two storey form of the proposed building would nevertheless still be a significant addition in this location. Whilst it would set back and stepped down, such positioning, on what would be an atypically narrow plot, would erode the visual gap between the properties and compromise the sense of space and openness in the area.
8. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's prominent position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along East Barnet Road and Middle Road. I therefore consider that the proposed development, by virtue of its scale, siting and layout, would fail to promote or reinforce the distinctive characteristic of the area and would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area.
9. I have considered the appellant's arguments that the design and layout of the proposed development has been carefully considered and redesigned in response to the previously dismissed scheme at the site¹ and the Council's pre-application advice, in order to minimise any impacts on the area. Whilst the use of matching materials, fenestrations and the boundary treatment would assist in integrating the proposal with the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above. As such, I consider the proposal would adversely harm rather than positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy DM01 of the Barnet's Development Management Policies Document 2012, Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Barnet's Core Strategy 2012 and the Council's Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2016. These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is of a high standard of design that respects the local context in terms of appearance, scale and design of the development and responds to the overall character of the area. In addition, it would not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design that are sympathetic to the local character.

¹ APP/N5090/W/17/3169735

Other Matters

11. I have noted the comments received from third parties, including the letters of support for the proposal. However, in light of my findings on the main issue relating to this appeal, my decision does not turn on these matters.
12. I have considered the various benefits put forward by the appellant that the proposal would bring arising from the scheme's design, the additional dwelling contributing to the housing supply and need in the area and making the effective and efficient use of a small brownfield site within an accessible location. While I have given them some weight in favour of the appeal, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. For all these reasons, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the development plan conflicts identified.

Conclusion

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

David Troy

INSPECTOR