



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 19 January 2021

by G Pannell BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/20/3260598

221 Highfield Road, Romford, RM5 3AN

- 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 Imran Asghar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0909.20, dated 26 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey dwelling into 2 x two storey 2 bedroom homes with associated parking, amenity space and cycle storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On the 19th January 2021, the Government published the 2020 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results. The HDT results show that the London Borough of Havering has delivered 36% of its housing requirement over the latest 3-year period. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) would be engaged. As this was also the outcome of the 2019 HDT results I have not sought further views from the parties on this matter.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed dwelling on:
 - the safety and convenience of highway users;
 - on the living conditions of future occupiers with particular reference to internal living standards, bin and cycle storage; and
 - the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Highways

4. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 1b which indicates that the site has poor access to public transport. Policy DC33 of the London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) states that car parking provision for new development should not exceed the maxima set out within Annex 5 of the DPD, and these standards are based on those provided within the London Plan. Car parking standards for new dwellings are set out in policy DC2 of the DPD which

indicates for areas within PTAL 1-2 where the predominant housing type is semi-detached and terraced houses that there is a high demand for parking. The DPD indicates that the development should therefore provide 1.5 – 2 spaces.

5. The submitted plans indicate that to the rear of the site, accessed via Ashvale Gardens is a garage and parking space and the photos provided within the submitted plans also indicate that vehicles currently park within the existing side garden. The application form also specifies that the site benefits from one parking space. Therefore, the evidence before me demonstrates that the existing dwelling benefits from a degree of off-street parking.
6. Whilst the proposal would provide two parking spaces as required by the policies within the DPD, the proposed parking space would be located in front of the garage, in a tandem arrangement and therefore it would not be practical for the provision to be shared between the host property and the proposed dwelling. As a result, the development as a whole does not provide sufficient parking to meet the needs of the occupiers of both the proposed and existing dwelling.
7. The proposal would result in an additional dwelling within Highfield Way and therefore increase demand for parking on the street. Due to the width of Ashvale Gardens, opportunities for off-street parking are limited to parking provided within bays which partially straddle the pavement. Increased parking demand in instances of limited supply may lead to additional congestion as drivers seek parking spaces, or park illegally, which would be detrimental to highway safety. There is no evidence to suggest that such circumstances could be avoided by the appeal proposal.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a potentially harmful impact on highway safety and would conflict with policy DC33 of the DPD and policy 6.13 of the London Plan. The lack of appropriate parking would lead to inappropriate parking within the vicinity of the site harmful to highway safety. There is also nothing to suggest that the proposal would adhere to any parking standards within the emerging London Plan.

Living Conditions

9. Policy 3.5 of the London Plan makes reference to the need for development to comply with the Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), which states that a 2 bedroom dwelling is required to provide 79 sqm of internal space for 2 bedroom 4 persons. The details provided within the NDSS states that in order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) should have a floor area of at least 11.5sqm and one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide. The submitted plans indicate that both bedrooms have a floor area in excess of 11.5 sqm and therefore are of sufficient size to accommodate 2 persons each. These standards are carried forward within the emerging London Plan.
10. The evidence before me indicates that the dwelling does not provide sufficient internal space to comply with this policy and does not provide any areas of internal storage. As a consequence, the dwelling would represent an oppressively confined form of residential accommodation, that would be significantly harmful to its occupants.

11. The submitted plans indicate an area for refuse storage within the front garden of the proposed dwelling and there is also sufficient space within either the proposed amenity space or garage for storage of both cycles and refuse. Therefore, I am satisfied that these matters could be satisfactorily addressed by a suitably worded condition, should I have been allowing the appeal.
12. In conclusion, the development fails to provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, with particular reference to internal living standards and is contrary to Policy 3.5 of the London Plan and Policy DC61 which requires development to be of the highest standards internally and externally and complement or improve the amenity and character of the area through its layout.

Character and appearance

13. The appeal site comprises the side garden of 221 Highfield Road, an end terrace two storey dwelling, located on the junction of Highfield Road and Ashvale Gardens. This part of Highfield Road comprises a mix of semi-detached and terraced two storey dwellings and is predominately residential in character, with the dwellings evenly spaced in a generally linear pattern.
14. The appeal site is enclosed by close boarded fencing which abuts the pavement and is mirrored on the opposite side of Ashvale Gardens. The boundary treatments that exist along the length of the road encloses this part of Ashvale Gardens.
15. The proposed dwelling would be sited within the side garden of 221 Highfield Road and has not been designed to be subservient to the main building, in terms of ridge height or set back from the front elevation. However, the overall footprint of the extension would be submissive to the original dwelling in terms of its width.
16. I accept that the proposed extension would result in a loss of symmetry to the front elevation, however the inclusion of the bay window and entrance porch would add a degree of cohesion and breaks up the overall massing of the building. Therefore, I do not consider that the extension would result in a poor relationship with the existing building.
17. Whilst the buildings design, with its side elevation set in at an angle in order to maintain a setback from the footway along Ashvale Gardens, is not replicated within the immediate vicinity of the site. I do not consider that the design of the building would be dominant or incongruous within the street scene as the angled wall would not be prominent when viewed from the front elevation and would not disrupt any defined pattern of development along Ashvale Gardens due to the lack of buildings fronting the pavement along this part of the road.
18. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. The development would comply with Policy DC61 of the DPD and policy 7.4 of the London Plan, which require development to maintain, enhance or improve the character and appearance of the local area. The emerging London Plan is not materially different to the adopted policy and does not alter my findings on this main issue.

Other Matters

19. I note that the evidence refers to other similar development in the surrounding area. However, I have not been provided with any specific details and therefore, I am not aware of the full circumstances of these cases and in any event each scheme must be considered and determined on its individual merits.

Housing Delivery

20. The 2020 HDT results show that the Council has underdelivered against its housing requirement over the latest 3-year period. Consequently the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Framework is engaged whereby planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework, taken as a whole.
21. Considering the current shortfall, 1 dwelling would provide a limited contribution to housing supply in the area. There would be social benefits arising from the contribution to the Council's housing supply, noting the Framework highlights the contribution small and medium sized sites can make to meeting the housing requirement in the area. The development would also give rise to some economic benefits during the construction phase and provide limited support to local services.
22. Nevertheless, the identified adverse impacts of the development in respect of living conditions and lack of appropriate levels of parking provision would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, including its presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Pannell

INSPECTOR