



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 April 2021

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/W/20/3263372
7A Sidmouth Road, London, NW2 5HH

- 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 Kyte Dakos Property Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 20/2755, dated 6 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 2 x two storey semi-detached dwelling houses with habitable roof (loft) space, provision of bin storage and cycle parking, private amenity space and associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area. The development plan includes policies CP17 in the Council's Core Strategy (CS) and DMP1 in the Council's Development Management Policies document which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that proposals protect and enhance the suburban character of Brent and are of a scale and design that complements the locality.
3. The appeal site lies to the rear of a property on Sidmouth Road with a frontage onto Milverton Road, within a residential area of interwar-built dwellings whose generous proportions and siting within good sized plots contribute strongly to the attractive, suburban character and appearance of the area.
4. The proposed development would be sited between a semi-detached dwelling of a mock Tudor style with deep projecting bays and a large detached subdivided Edwardian dwelling at no 7/7A Sidmouth Road which has a double fronted elevation with a shallower projecting bay and its original main entrance onto Milverton Road.
5. The Council's design guidance in SPD1, the Brent Design Guide (2018), seeks to ensure that proposals reflect existing building lines. The main block of the proposed houses would be sited in line with the projecting bay of the adjacent semi and set back from the front elevation of 7/7A Sidmouth Road. As such it would create a stepped building line, sitting between the two adjacent buildings.

6. Although the siting does not replicate that of the adjacent pair of semi-detached dwellings, on the opposite side of Milverton Road at nos 47 and 49 there is another pair of semis whose design bears more similarity to the proposal and which has a similar siting in relation to the front building line of its neighbours. For these reasons, I find that the siting would not be unduly prominent within the street scene and would be acceptable.
7. The layout of the proposal would occupy much of its plot with single storey projections to the rear extending up to the rear boundary. However, the Council has not objected to the loss of the garden land in itself or to the amount of amenity space for the future residents of the new houses or to the impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents. From what I have seen, I am satisfied that the proposal would be acceptable in those respects. The Council's objections in terms of layout concern the effect on the character and appearance of the area. I have noted that The London Plan 2021 says that '*local character evolves over time and will need to change in appropriate locations to accommodate additional housing on small sites*'. Even so, although the proposal has a different layout within its plot than much of the surrounding development, that would not be clearly discernible from the street or from the rear given the existing high boundary along the rear of the site which could be retained by a condition if the appeal were acceptable in all other regards. Therefore, whilst the layout of the proposal would differ from that of the surrounding development, the impact on the character of the area would not be clearly discernible in this respect and the proposed layout would be acceptable.
8. The proposed design draws from the surrounding styles but due to the limited size of the plot, its size and scale are smaller than those of the other semi-detached pairs in the street. The proposal comprises a crown roof design with a central shallow hipped roof (as amended during the course of the application) although the appeal statement says that the original plan for a crown roof with a central flat section is preferred. Whilst there are other examples of crown roofs and differing roof forms in the wider area, the predominant type of roof is a traditional hipped form. The constraints of the plot have resulted in a steeper main pitch and a lower ridge and eaves height than the adjacent dwellings. The scale and form of the main roof is therefore discordant with the scale and form of the surrounding roofs and regardless of whether the central section is flat or hipped, the new building would appear incongruous and out of scale within the street scene.
9. Detailed elements of the building such as the projecting gable bays, are also scaled down. The gabled roofs over the projecting bays are of a steeper pitch than the main roof and the gabled porches and this has resulted in a lack of cohesiveness in the design.
10. By reason of their contrived design and discordant size and scale, the resulting dwellings would appear neither truly contemporary nor authentically traditional and would fail to harmonise with their setting.
11. The appellant has referred to several examples of dwellings approved in the area but I have seen nothing that would persuade me to conclude that those are directly comparable in terms of their context or design to this proposal that would lead me to reach a different conclusion.
12. For these reasons, and notwithstanding my findings in regard to siting and layout, I find that the proposed development, by reason of its overall form,

size, scale and detail would fail to reflect the generous proportions of the surrounding dwellings and would not complement the locality or enhance the suburban character of the area.

Planning balance and conclusion

13. The proposal would create two additional family-sized dwellings, as sought by the Council's policies, with resultant economic benefits. It would also maximise the use of land and would boost the housing supply in the Borough, as sought by the Council's policies and by national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. However, given the small scale of the proposal, those matters would not outweigh the significant harm I have identified that would be caused in terms of the character and appearance of the area.
14. For the reasons stated above, I conclude that the proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to development plan policies CP17 and DMP1. The appeal is dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector