



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 May 2022

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/21/3286788

90 Bedfont Lane, Feltham TW14 9BP

- 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 Mohan, Innovative Accountants Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00094/90/P1, dated 19 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single storey office extension and erection of a double storey with pitched roof extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form, although I note that it has been expressed slightly differently including on the appeal form and on the Council's decision notice.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and area; and (ii) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings with particular regard to privacy and outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal building is at one end of a short terrace of similar buildings with two-storey outriggers and single-storey projections of considerable depth to their rear, and is in use as an office at ground-floor level. Other development in the vicinity of the site includes neighbouring three-storey flats at 82 Bedfont Lane, single-storey bungalows to the rear of the site, and flats of up to 10 storeys in height around Manor Place close by which provide for a fairly mixed character to the area overall.
5. The proposed extension would be of comparable depth to the existing development on the site. However, it would include a first-floor level with a pitched roof that would be set away from the rear of the host building. This would be of similar height to the main roof of the host property, and would be taller than the outrigger to the appeal and neighbouring properties in the terrace. As a consequence, and in combination with the overall bulk and mass

that would result from the greater height and increased upper scale of the extension, I consider that it would be an awkward and disproportionate addition that would dominate the host building to the detriment of its character and appearance. Views of the development from the Bedfont Lane street scene would be limited, but it would be apparent from Manor Place and surrounding buildings. In these views, I find despite the diversity in the height, scale, form and appearance of other buildings nearby that the unsympathetic nature of the development against the host building would be prominent, and it would stand out as an incongruous and jarring feature.

6. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and area, and it would conflict with Policies CC1 and CC2 of the Local Plan 2015-2030. Amongst other things, these policies seek high quality urban design and architecture, and development that responds sensitively to an area's character and to the site and its characteristics and constraints.

Living Conditions

7. The distance between the first-floor part of the extension and the main rear elevation of the appeal building is a matter of disagreement between the main parties, but even on the basis of the appellant's figures, the gap would be relatively small. The development would span the width of the site, and in my judgement, its height and scale in such close proximity to a window and door to the rear of the first-floor flat at 90A Bedfont Lane would be highly dominant, and would result in a significant and unwelcome degree of enclosure that would harm outlook for occupiers of this flat. Although views from windows to the rear of the first floor of 92 Bedfont Lane would be oblique, I consider that the depth of the extension along the boundary and its height would also be overbearing to occupiers of this property.
8. In addition, the proposal would result in two-storey development extending along a considerable proportion of the boundary of the site with the amenity space to flats at No 82. Given that there would be no facing windows, the development would not overlook the space, but it would still result in a significant degree of enclosure and I consider that it would be imposing, detracting from the use and enjoyment of the neighbouring amenity space.
9. There would also be some views of the development from windows to the neighbouring bungalow to the rear of the site. However, these would be at an oblique angle, and I am satisfied that the separation provided would be sufficient to ensure the development would not cause meaningful harm to outlook for occupiers of this dwelling. Be that as it may, there would be a terrace to the rear of the extension. Based on my observations at my visit, there would be views from the terrace down towards the bungalow windows at fairly close range. While the terrace may only be used occasionally and during the working day, I find that the resulting overlooking would nevertheless be intrusive, and would cause a harmful loss of privacy for the occupiers of the bungalow.
10. I appreciate that the development would obscure some views of the rear of No 90A from flats within the closest six-storey part of development on Manor Place to the rear of the site. However, the distance at which these views occur would reduce current actual overlooking to occupiers of No 90A, and I do not

consider any improvement in privacy would justify the harm that would instead be caused to their living conditions by the loss of outlook.

11. I acknowledge that the Manor Place development includes balconies, and that it is very close to neighbouring bungalows. However, the closest bungalows did not appear to include windows facing the adjacent development that would be overlooked or enclosed, and it is not clear from the evidence before me that the relationships between the buildings would be directly comparable to those which would result between the appeal development and its neighbours. Moreover, I do not know the full circumstances which led to this development being permitted, and I do not therefore find it a compelling reason to allow the appeal proposal.
12. For these reasons, I conclude on this main issue that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings through a loss of outlook and privacy. While I acknowledge that neighbouring occupiers have not objected to the development, the harm I have identified would be permanent and would conflict with Policy CC2 of the Local Plan which includes requirements that development provides adequate outlook and minimises overbearingness and overlooking.

Other Matters

13. The proposal would provide for a staff room, and the appellant indicates that it would support the growth of the existing business on the ground floor which is in need of space. However, the contribution that the proposal would make to employment and the local economy would be limited by its small scale, and I do not consider that the modest benefits of the proposal would be sufficient to outweigh the cumulative harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR