



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/22/3291581

The Old Paddock, 5 Oakleigh Road, Hatch End HA5 4HB

- 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 Bernie Suresparan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/2494/21, dated 15 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two storey dwelling house with loft habitable rooms following the demolition of the existing house; and readjustment of the vehicle and pedestrian gates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The dwellings on Oakleigh Road are varied in terms of their period, style and scale. They are however all set well back from this tree-lined road, generally on large landscaped plots. Those of more substantial proportions, such as No 3, typically have noticeable gaps to at least one side boundary, often above ground floor level. These characteristics contribute to the road's distinctive spacious and verdant character.
4. The Old Paddock is a particularly large dwelling, sited on a generous plot, which abuts Kennedy Close to one side and Witney Close to the other. Its proposed replacement would be constructed in a similar style and with the same external materials, and it would also be set well back from Oakleigh Road. However, its proportions, including its very long front face and its two storey side wings, would give it a rather elongated form which would contrast with the greater verticality of most dwellings in the road, including No 3.
5. It would also be taller to the eaves and to the ridge than the dwelling it would replace and, compared to it, it would be much closer to the side boundaries at first floor level, particularly on the side facing Kennedy Close. Consequently, although it would have greater symmetry than the existing house, it would also have a much greater bulk.

6. Given the proposed dwelling's proximity to those side boundaries, there would be very limited space for significant landscaping there. As a result of that, and the scheme's very substantial bulk, the proposal would have a domineering impact on the streetscene, which would contrast unfavourably with the much more discrete setting, or the more modest scale, of the other dwellings in Oakleigh Road.
7. That harmful impact would be particularly apparent when approaching from the south, where the dwelling's prominence and mass would be starkly visible looking across the junction with Kennedy Close. The scheme would therefore significantly harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. At part 6.7 of his appeal statement the appellant refers to other dwellings in the locality which are close to one or both of the plot's side boundaries. However, none of those examples are on Oakleigh Road; or prominently abut three roads in the manner of this site. They do not therefore change my conclusion that this scheme would jar with this road's prevailing character.
9. Amongst other things and in general terms, Policy D3 of The London Plan 2021, Policy CS1 Part B of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012, and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies 2013 require proposals to be of a high design standard; and to enhance the local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness and character, having regard to matters such as scale, proportions, siting and spacing.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, which creates better places in which to live and work.
11. For the above reasons, the scheme would conflict with those policies. It would also fail to accord with the advice in the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010, which sets out at Part 4 the importance of space around buildings, and the need for new development to recognise the scale and massing of surrounding buildings, and to reflect these where they are a positive attribute of the area's character.
12. In its favour, the scheme has been designed to meet the needs of a growing family and, whilst a relatively modern house would be demolished, there would be modest environmental benefits arising from, for instance, the building's air source heat pumps and its greater energy efficiency. However, from the limited landscaping and ecological information before me, I am not persuaded that the proposal would improve air quality or biodiversity.
13. I note the appellant's dissatisfaction with the Council's handling of his application and the time it took to make a decision. I am also aware that no neighbours objected. However, I have determined the scheme on its planning merits, and for the above reasons its limited benefits do not outweigh the significant harm that it would cause. Having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR