



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 August 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11TH August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/22/3294523

Garages to the rear of 35 Charlton Road, Harrow HA3 9HP

- 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 C Catalin against the decision of Harrow Council.
 - The application Ref P/3756/21, dated 9 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of four garages and the erection of a one bedroom single storey dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether or not occupants of the proposed dwelling would experience appropriate living conditions.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The locality is predominantly characterised by a mix of two storey suburban houses in a variety of styles, along with a scattering of single storey dwellings. The properties generally face, and are set back slightly from, the highway, with gardens and occasionally garaging, towards the rear.
4. The appeal site comprises a block of four garages sited between, and broadly to the rear of, 35/37 Charlton Road ('Nos 35/37') and 2 Kenmore Road. Whilst described by the appellant as in a poor state of repair, and currently used for storage, in glimpsed views from the highway, the building has the appearance of typical domestic garaging, and does not cause visual detriment to the area.
5. The proposed dwelling would occupy a similar footprint compared to the garaging it would replace. To the front, it would have an entry door, with mainly narrow, high-level windows either side. However, whilst that design seeks to minimise overlooking of nearby properties, the resultant dwelling's front face would have a very bland and utilitarian appearance, which would be

dominated by a largely unalleviated expanse of brick wall. Although the bricks would match those at Nos 35/37, the scheme's appearance would contrast unfavourably with the greater design detailing or more generous fenestration, evident on the front elevations of nearby properties, including that pair.

6. I am not persuaded that that harmful visual impact would be overcome by trellising with climbing plants as suggested by the appellant, or that such a matter could be appropriately addressed and enforced by means of a planning condition. On the basis of the evidence before me, and given the modest size and the configuration of the site, opportunities for significant landscaping appear limited.
7. The proposed block paved forecourt with its parking and domestic structures would have a broadly similar visual impact compared to the existing hardstanding. However, the proposed dwelling's siting well back from the road, and broadly to the rear of other properties, would be at odds with the established pattern of housing development in the area.
8. Although the appellant has indicated his willingness to increase the size of the front fenestration, I have dealt with the scheme before me on its merits. In any event, such a variation could increase the impact on adjacent occupiers, and to address this matter by means of a condition would deprive others of the opportunity to comment.
9. Summing up, for the above reasons the scheme would harm the character and appearance of the area. However, given that it would replace garaging of a broadly similar form, scale and siting, and that it would not be prominent in the streetscene, the harm would be fairly limited.
10. Nevertheless, for the above reasons, on this issue the scheme would conflict with Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 ('LP'), Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012 ('HCS') and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013 ('HDMP'). Amongst other things, these require development to enhance the local context and character, with regard to matters such as design, appearance, shape, patterns, and existing building forms. It would also conflict with the similar stance at Section 4 of the Harrow Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2010 ('SPD').

Living conditions

11. The front-facing high-level windows serving the bedroom and living/dining/kitchen space, together with the proposed skylights, would provide those rooms with natural daylight, but only a very limited outlook. To the rear those rooms would be served by larger windows and by a set of French doors, but these would directly face a 2 metre high close boarded timber fence at a maximum distance of around 1.3 metres from the French doors, and even less opposite the bedroom window.
12. As a result, the occupants of the proposed dwelling would experience a very limited and enclosed outlook from both main habitable rooms. This would contrast markedly with the views over rear gardens typical of housing in the area.
13. Consequently, whilst the scheme would meet the LP's minimum internal space standards, it would nevertheless fail to provide good living conditions for the dwelling's future occupants. It would therefore conflict with those parts of LP

Policy D3 and D6, and HDMP Policy DM1, which require housing of a high quality design and with a high standard of amenity, including an appropriate outlook, having regard to the prevailing context. It would also conflict with the general approach at paragraphs 4.52 and 4.66 of the SPD.

Other matters

14. In its favour, the scheme would make use of a site with permanent structures to deliver a one bedroom unit of accommodation in a sustainable location. Consequently, it finds support from development plan and National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') policies which, amongst other things, seek to make the best use of land – including previously developed land, significantly boost housing supply, and increase the stock of smaller houses. However, as just one unit would be provided, this attracts modest weight in its favour.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. I have found that the scheme would fail to provide appropriate living conditions for its future occupants, and that it would also cause fairly limited harm to the character and appearance of the area. The scheme's modest benefits do not outweigh the totality of the harm that it would cause. It would conflict with the development plan when considered as a whole, and it does not benefit from the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development.
16. Having regard to all other matters raised, including representations by interested parties, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR