



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2022

by P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/22/3301613

48 and 50 Brentmead Place, Golders Green, London NW11 9LJ

- 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 Danciger against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref 21/4840/FUL, dated 31 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is creation of new first and second floor levels at each of the properties to create 3no additional flats at each property. Provision of waste, recycling and bicycle storage area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site address is listed in the application form as 48 Brentmead Place. Section 7 of the application form sets out that the proposals comprise both 48 and 50 Brentmead Place, though it is noted the street is written as 'Brentmeade' Place. Having regard to the details in the application and appeal forms, plans, supporting documents and the street signage observed on my site visit, I have listed the address as "*48 and 50 Brentmead Place, Golders Green, London NW11 9LJ*". I find this to accurately define the appeal site.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises 2 detached bungalow-style buildings with roofspace accommodation. Both buildings have been internally subdivided to create additional separate units. The site faces the busy dual-carriageway A406 North Circular Road and sits in a predominantly residential area. When viewed from the A406, No 48 sits to the right and No 50 sits to the left. In terms of the immediate surroundings, the land immediately to the right is vacant and contained by solid protective barriers. To the left is No 52 Brentmead Place, a 2-storey building with the appearance of a detached house with accommodation in the roofspace.
5. The proposed development would involve raising the roof of both properties. Though they would be internally split, the resulting appearance would resemble a pair of detached 2-storey houses with roofspace accommodation.

6. Presently, the side elevations of No 50 and the neighbouring No 52 sit very close together. There is a narrow gap between the properties but, visually, the eaves of No 52 appear to almost overhang the side wall of the lower No 50. Unless very close to the properties, the gap between Nos 50 and 52 is largely imperceptible.
7. The relationship between Nos 50 and 52 would be significantly altered by the development proposed. Whilst there would be no change to the footprint of the properties, the notable difference in height between Nos 50 and 52 currently acts as a distinctive transition between the largely 2 storey development to the left of the appeal site and the single storey development upon the appeal site and to the right of it. The two properties are read as wholly separate entities when viewed in the streetscene.
8. Whilst there may be a very minimal gap retained, this would appear imperceptible from most nearby vantage points. The increased height to No 50 would result in the two buildings being effectively joined together and read as a single entity of similar, albeit slightly different height. The boundary between Nos 50 and 52 appears particularly constrained, and the design solution proposed would create a visually complicated and ungainly meeting point between the two properties. Coupled with the distinctly different designs and varying building lines, the development would appear uncharacteristic and result in an uncomfortable relationship between Nos 50 and 52.
9. I studied the surrounding area as part of my site visit, including the nearby examples cited by the appellant, and I acknowledge that the surrounding residential character is varied. Although many dwellings in the area may have been converted to flats, there is a wide range of building types and designs ranging from what appear to be larger houses to smaller bungalows. However, the majority of dwellings take either a detached or semi-detached form and include features, either through gaps in the built form or variations in height, to differentiate each building. The visual terraced form that would result is not a characteristic form of development in the locality.
10. I note that the proposal would make efficient use of the appeal site in a highly accessible location which supports the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'). However, the Framework is also clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that development that is not well designed should be refused.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, which would be in conflict with Policy D3 of The London Plan (2021), Policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document (September 2012), and Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document (September 2012). Together these policies seek, among other objectives, to enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness, to seek the highest standards of urban design, and to make the best use of land by following a design-led approach. There would also be conflict with the Barnet Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance (October 2016) and the Framework, which have similar aims.

Conclusion

12. The proposed development would fail to accord with the policies of the Development Plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. For the above reasons, and taking account of all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Storey

INSPECTOR