



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2022

by P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/W/22/3303121

Brownlow Lodge, Brownlow Road, Enfield, Southgate N11 2BL

- 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 Michael Byrne of Goldstage Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 22/01022/FUL, dated 22 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is creation of additional third floor roof extension to provide 2 x 1 bedroom self contained flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site fronts the busy thoroughfare of Brownlow Road. The immediate surroundings are predominantly residential and comprise a variety of dwelling types and styles, including detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, some of which have been converted into flats. There are also several examples of purpose-built flat blocks of varying styles. The building subject to the appeal is a purpose-built 3-storey block of flats with a flat roof. The buildings to either side fronting Brownlow Road have the appearance of 2-storey houses with pitched roofs.
4. The site is located a short walk from Bounds Green underground station which can be reached without deviating from Brownlow Road. The underground station sits on a busy road junction and within an area characterised by buildings of varying uses, styles and heights. Despite the limited distance between the appeal site and the underground station, the area's character changes significantly along this route, with a gradual evolution from predominantly residential at the appeal site to mixed use and commercial near the underground station. This is reflected in the scale and design of buildings, with the pattern of development and building heights gradually intensifying towards the underground station.
5. When approaching the appeal site from both directions along Brownlow Road, the building is currently viewed as an inclusive part of the streetscene. Whilst

its 3-storey flat roofed design contrasts with the 2-storey pitched-roof design of its immediate neighbours, the overall heights are broadly comparable, and the building's height does not mark it out as an anomaly in the streetscape. I note the nearby block of flats at Brownlow Court is slightly taller than the appeal building, and this does form part of the appeal site's setting when viewed from both directions along Brownlow Road. However, Brownlow Court is also a 3-storey building with a flat roof, and consequently the height difference is not strongly perceived in these views.

6. Conversely, the proposed development would be raised above the adjacent buildings in terms of both overall scale and the perception of height resulting from the creation of an additional storey. The resulting development would appear as an uncharacteristic and dominant feature within the streetscene, at odds with the surrounding built environment. I acknowledge that some buildings closer to Bounds Green underground station are of a comparable scale and design to the appeal proposal. However, their distance from the appeal site means that they are viewed in a different context than that of the appeal scheme. As such, I have given these examples limited weight in my decision.
7. The upper floor would be stepped in from the sides of the existing building to give a subordinate appearance, and it is proposed to feature external zinc cladding. I acknowledge the materials and design of the existing building do contrast somewhat with many of the closest neighbouring buildings. The design and materials of the proposed development would also contrast with the surroundings. Though based on the appearance of the existing building, I do not find these aspects of the development to be specifically harmful to the character and appearance of the area. However, the lack of harm in this regard does not outweigh the harm previously identified with regard to the development's scale and massing.
8. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development taken as a whole would result in overall harm to the character and appearance of the area, which would be in conflict with Policy CP30 of The Enfield Plan Core Strategy 2010-2025 (Adopted November 2010), Policies DMD6, DMD8, DMD13, DMD37 and DMD38 of the Enfield Council Development Management Document (DMD) (Adopted November 2014), Policy D4 of The London Plan (March 2021) and the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'). Together these policies and guidance seek, among other objectives, for all developments to be high-quality and design-led, for the scale and form of development to be appropriate to existing patterns of development and character typologies, for developments to be of an appropriate scale, bulk and massing, and for developments to address opportunities and constraints presented by the site.

Other Matters

9. I acknowledge the proposed development would appear acceptable on several grounds including the standard of accommodation, effects on living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, highways and sustainability grounds. However, it would be expected that any well-designed development would meet these criteria, and accordingly they are neutral factors in the planning balance.
10. The Local Planning Authority has confirmed it has failed to meet the Housing Delivery Test set out in Footnote 8 of the Framework. In such circumstances,

and with specific regard to this site, Paragraph 11 d) of the Framework directs that the relevant Development Plan policies which are most important for determining the application must be considered out-of-date, and permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

11. The Framework emphasises the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing. Although the proposed development would contribute to this objective and deliver housing in a sustainable and accessible location, it would make only a modest contribution of 2 units. On this basis, I attach only limited weight to the benefits it would provide.
12. On the basis of the harm previously identified, the proposed development would conflict with Paragraph 130 of the Framework which seeks to ensure, among other objectives, that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and layout and are sympathetic to local character and the surrounding built environment. I find this conflict to carry significant weight.
13. For the above reasons, the adverse impacts of allowing this appeal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. I therefore do not find the proposals would deliver sustainable development and, accordingly, the presumption in favour outlined by Paragraph 11 of the Framework would not apply in this case.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, taking account of the Development Plan, the Framework and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Storey

INSPECTOR