



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2022

by B Pattison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 JANUARY 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/W/22/3303156

86 Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex CM13 2AQ

- 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 Danny Horne against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00427/FUL, dated 1 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and construction of new dwelling with private amenity and off street car parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue(s)

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area
 - The effect of the proposed development on highway safety, with particular regard to the provision of off-street car parking and access onto Ingrave Road.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached house, within a short stretch of similar semi-detached houses on this side of the road. They have hipped roofs and are constructed with a mixture of brickwork, render and mock-Tudor beams. The houses are generously set back from the highway behind driveways and a grass verge which runs between the pavement edge and the properties' front boundaries.
4. Both parties agree that the spatial openness of the area is a key characteristic. This is derived from the spacing between the dwellings' side elevations and the site boundaries. Several of the neighbouring houses, including the adjoining semi-detached property have been enlarged through two storey side extensions. However, these have maintained an element of physical and visual separation between the properties' built form and the sites' side boundaries. This is maintained by setting the side elevations away from the shared boundary, sometimes with an additional set back at first floor level.

5. In contrast, the proposed extension would be positioned so that the outer wall would effectively mark the site boundary. As a result, the two storey extension would appear cramped within its plot and would close the existing space to the side of the property. Despite there being a private access road immediately beyond the side boundary, the extension would significantly diminish the sense of spaciousness around the appeal site. This would be particularly apparent in views from Ingrave Road but also in views along the adjoining private access road from which the unrelieved depth of the extension would appear as a looming presence. Its visual impact would be exacerbated as the extension would be deep, projecting beyond the host property's existing rear elevation.
6. The addition of the front door would clearly identify the extension as a self-contained dwelling. This would unbalance the front elevation of the property as a whole and would draw additional attention to the extension. That said, if the development was an actual extension to No 86 some physical subordination would likely be encouraged. Whilst there are examples of terraced properties within Hawthorn Avenue and Orchard Avenue, these are a distance from the appeal site on roads which have a different residential character. The appeal property forms part of a small, coherent group of relatively uniform semi-detached properties on this side of the road. The creation of a small terrace would be an uncharacteristic addition within this stretch of semi-detached properties.
7. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal development would harm the character and appearance of the area. I therefore find that it would conflict with Policies NE07 and BE14 and of the Brentwood Local Plan (2022) (BLP). These policies seek to ensure, amongst other aspects, that all new development is of a high standard of design and respects local character. I have also found conflict with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) and the National Design Guide (2021) that seek good design sympathetic to the local area.

Highway safety

8. The submitted drawings show a single parking space to the front of the proposed dwelling. The Highway Authority confirm that this would not comply with the Essex Parking Standards – Design and Good Practice (2009) (EPS), which require two off-street car parking spaces for two bed houses. The appellant has provided an additional drawing which shows a second car parking space provided to the front of the house. However, it has not been demonstrated how four vehicles could access the proposed spaces given the restricted width of the access driveway to the site, which significantly constrains the access and manoeuvrability of vehicles into the spaces.
9. This part of Ingrave Road is a highly trafficked road described by the Highway Authority as a Main Distributor on Essex County Council's Development Management Route Hierarchy. I observed that many vehicles were travelling quickly along the road despite the roundabout immediately in front of the appeal site. Whilst there is currently space for vehicles associated with the host property to turn within the site, with the addition of a further two parking spaces, there would be insufficient space vehicles to turn and exit the site in a forward gear. Regardless of the impacts that the development would have on visibility and access to the site, the reversing of vehicles out or into the site

from the roundabout would be hazardous for pedestrians and vehicles emerging from the site, and for approaching vehicles on the highway.

10. It has been put to me that there is an area of additional hardstanding proposed between the appeal site and edge of the footway, which would offer additional manoeuvring space for vehicles. The submitted drawings do not indicate the installation of additional hardstanding, and the area in question is currently a green landscaped verge outside of the appeal site boundary. I have not been provided with details to suggest that this area is within the ownership or control of the appellant. Accordingly, there is no evidence that alterations to enlarge the hardstanding and widen the access to the appeal site would be feasible. Consequently, it has not been demonstrated that there would be sufficient space for vehicles to safely turn and exit in a forward gear.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal development would potentially not provide satisfactory off-street car parking and would harm local highway safety. I therefore find that it would conflict with Policy BE13 of the Brentwood Local Plan (2022) (BLP). This policy seeks to ensure, amongst other aspects, that all new development takes account of the EPS, or area supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify deviation from the standards.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. The Council's Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results fall below the 75% threshold. Therefore paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (Framework) applies. As the site is not within a protected area or asset of particular importance paragraph 11(d)(i) is not relevant to the appeal. However, the test in paragraph 11(d)(ii) should be applied. This requires an assessment of the proposal against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
13. The Framework expects development to be visually attractive as a result of good layout whilst maintaining a strong sense of place using the arrangement of streets to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live. The Framework also expects development to maintain highway safety. Policies NE07, BE14 and BE13 of the BLP are therefore consistent with the Framework. Even taking into account the Council not having met its housing targets, the conflict between the proposal and the development plan should be afforded great weight or substantial weight.
14. Set against the harm identified there would be limited benefits associated with the proposal, such as making efficient use of the site. Also, an additional unit whilst beneficial, would make a modest contribution to the overall delivery of housing. I note the appellant's reference to a recent local planning appeal decision¹. Here the Inspector found that the proposed roof alterations would be unduly bulky but felt that this harm would be outweighed by other benefits. In the current appeal I have identified that the proposal would adversely impact on the character and appearance of the area and also highway safety. In the circumstances, this would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

¹ APP/H1515/W/21/3272022

15. The proposal would also conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which would indicate that the appeal should be determined otherwise. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Pattison

INSPECTOR