



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2023

by S Rawle BA (Hons) Dip TP Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/22/3307397

147 Eastcote Lane, Harrow HA2 8RR

- 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 Marlpark 71 HA4 Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/1366/22, dated 7 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a semi-detached house to No 147 Eastcote Lane and alterations to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have also dealt with another appeal (Ref: APP/M5450/W/22/3307386) on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is on the corner of Eastcote Lane and Alexandra Avenue and comprises two parcels of land. The first contains an existing detached property currently divided into flats, associated garden and detached garage. The second comprises an area described by the appellant as grass covered unadopted highway land although I note that the appellant highlights that after receiving legal opinion, there is some question about the status of the land. I observed that this part of the appeal site is no longer grass covered as it has been gravelled with planting along the boundary.
5. The wider area is predominantly residential with houses of different styles and periods. Opposite the site on the other side of Eastcote Lane there is a parade of shops, and a corner plot has been redeveloped into a four-storey residential block comprising mainly flats. The building line on the opposite side to the appeal site on Alexandra Avenue varies and a dwelling allowed on appeal in 1972 sits forward of other properties on that side of the road. Nevertheless, Alexandra Avenue has an existing tree lined verge on both sides, and this creates an open and verdant character.

6. Setting aside the uncertainty about the status of the land described as unadopted highway land and even though it has now been gravelled with planting along the boundary, when taken together with the existing verge, cycleway and pavement, it creates an important open area between Alexandra Avenue and the existing dwelling on the appeal site. As this is devoid of any buildings it results in a strong sense of spaciousness at this prominent location at the junction of Eastcote Lane and Alexandra Avenue. This feature is an important positive attribute of the character and appearance of the locality and complements the open character of Alexandra Avenue.
7. Notwithstanding that a strip of the open area would be retained, the proposed development would nevertheless result in a significant part of the area to the side of the existing house being occupied by a semi-detached house with a substantial mass. As a result of its siting and overall scale, the proposed dwelling would harmfully erode the sense of spaciousness at this prominent location.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area in conflict with Policy D3 of the London Plan - The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London March 2021 (the London Plan) and Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy February 2012 and Policies DM1 and DM23 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies July 2013. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure new development comprises high quality design appropriate for its surroundings which responds positively to the local context and seeks to maintain grass verges on public and private streets. The scheme would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which promotes development that is sympathetic to local character.
9. The reason for refusal cites the Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Design Guide (SPD) but does not refer to a specific section. The delegated report references guidance on extensions which is contained within the householder section of the SPD, and it is this section which has been provided by the Council. As the proposal is for the erection of a semi-detached house, this section of the SPD is not directly relevant in this case.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has mentioned that they received pre-application advice on a larger flatted scheme. However, any pre-application advice received was on an entirely separate proposal and does not alter my conclusions on the main issue. I have dealt with the appeal scheme on its merits.
11. The appellant highlights that the proposal would contribute to meeting the Council's target for new housing on small sites and therefore accord with the housing growth objectives as set out in Policies H1 and H2 of the London Plan. While I accept that the proposal would result in an additional house on a small site, as it would only add one dwelling any benefit is clearly outweighed by my finding that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area.
12. The appellant also points out that although a small portion of garden land would be built upon, the Council considered that the proposal would be acceptable in this regard. They also highlight that the Council considered the proposal would be acceptable in architectural design terms, would meet

minimum space standards, would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents, parking arrangements were acceptable and raised no concerns about existing trees on the site. However, these other matters do not justify harmful development on the appeal site.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made otherwise in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

S Rawle

INSPECTOR