



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2023

by E Worley BA (Hons) Dip EP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/22/3310557

1 The Ridgeway, Acton, Hounslow, London W3 8LW

- 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 J Raja against the decision of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00940/1/P1, dated 9 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'New build to land adjacent to 1 The Ridgeway'.
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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 including whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Gunnersbury Park Conservation Area;
 - the effect of the development on the living conditions of the occupiers of 1 The Ridgeway having specific regard to the quantity of outdoor amenity space; and
 - whether the proposal would include appropriate measures to reduce carbon emissions having particular regard to renewable energy sources.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises 1 The Ridgeway (No 1), a 2 storey hipped roof dwelling and its garden. The property is located at the end of a short row of terraced dwellings and occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of The Ridgeway and Gunnersbury Avenue at the entrance to the residential development of which it forms part.
4. The property is within the Gunnersbury Park Conservation Area (the CA), which encompasses the residential area of the Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate, an early interwar garden suburb, and Gunnersbury Park, an historic park and garden, which includes open space and historic buildings and structures. The significance of the CA is derived from the age and architectural interest of the

historic buildings in the park and the complete and relatively unspoilt form of the garden suburb residential estate.

5. The garden suburb is triangular in shape and is characterised by residential development consisting of traditional terraced dwellings behind front boundary walls and hedges. The properties, many of which feature chimney stacks, are broadly similar in appearance and architectural style. Whilst there have been various additions and alterations to the properties, including dormers and side and rear extensions, there is nevertheless a pleasant sense of uniformity in the built form. Additionally, the area benefits from a significant number of mature street trees within the roadside verges, as well as landscaping to the front of the plots, which contributes to the verdant character of the area.
6. The existing dwelling at No 1 is set in from the side boundary of the site with a spacious undeveloped side garden, including landscaping. Despite the presence of the boundary fence and planting which give rise to a degree of containment, the undeveloped nature of the land nevertheless creates a sense of spaciousness at the junction. While this is in contrast to the general arrangement at No 2A, opposite, where the terrace has been previously extended, this arrangement reflects the corner green spaces, including garden areas to the side of the more capacious plots within the garden suburb which contribute to the character and appearance of the area and the significance of the CA as a heritage asset.
7. In detailed design terms, the proposal would reflect those around it and quality could be ensured through planning conditions. However, the siting of the proposed dwelling would introduce built form closer to the footpath and highway to the side of the property than the existing dwelling. Whilst it would be set in from the boundary so as not to appear unduly imposing when viewed from the footpath, due to the scale, bulk and massing of the proposed dwelling it would nevertheless encroach significantly into the otherwise open side garden at No 1. Consequently, the proposal would erode the open nature of the site and result in the loss of the green space which is a characteristic of the wider garden suburb layout. It would therefore diminish the character and appearance of the area and would fail to preserve the character of the CA.
8. When read alongside the additional development inserted at 2A the Ridgeway, the proposed development would provide a degree of balance at the gateway entrance of The Ridgeway from Gunnersbury Avenue as it would reflect the spatial layout of the terraced row opposite the site. However, whilst the open space at No 1 is not a feature that is replicated at the opposite corner of the junction, it nevertheless makes a positive contribution to those important general spacious characteristics of the character and appearance of the area overall. As such, the development at No 2A does not justify the harm I have identified.
9. Whilst the Design and Access statement indicates that the proposal would include a soft landscaped front garden with minimal hardscape to safeguard green space, this would fail to overcome the harm I have identified with regards to the loss of the sense of openness.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA and would undermine its significance as a designated heritage asset. In finding harm, this is something to which I have

given considerable importance and weight to. However, the harm that would arise would be localised and therefore the impact on the CA as a whole, is less than substantial in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

11. In accordance with advice in the Framework, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. While public benefits would arise in terms of the delivery of a family market housing unit, the contribution of one unit to housing supply in the borough would be limited and would not outweigh the harm I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the area and the CA.
12. Therefore, in the absence of any public benefits to outweigh this harm the proposal would conflict with Policy HC1 of the London Plan 2021 (the LP) in so far as it requires development to conserve the significance of heritage assets. It would also fail to accord with the collective aims of Policies SC1, CC1 and CC2 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (HLP) which require development to be of a high quality design, having regard to local context and character and to enhance the special qualities and heritage of places and Policy CC4 of the HLP which requires development to conserve heritage assets.
13. The Council's first refusal reason also refers to LP Policies D1 and D4. However, Policy D1 is a more strategic policy aimed at securing growth and the most appropriate form and land use for areas, using area assessments. Policy D4 focuses principally upon processes which assist in ensuring the delivery of design quality. Consequently, these policies are not determinative to the appeal.

Living conditions of the occupiers of No 1

14. Whilst modest in size the remaining rear garden area at No 1 would nevertheless include space for the usual outdoor activities associated with a dwelling, such as the drying of clothes, outdoor sitting, waste recycling and storage.
15. The appellant's Design and Access Statement indicates that the existing dwelling has 3 first floor bedrooms and up to 2 reception rooms downstairs. This would trigger a requirement for no less than 75m² of usable amenity space in accordance with Policy SC5. The Council's calculations indicate that the proposal would result in the retention of a 34.72 m² front garden and 45.77 m² rear garden to serve No 1, which would exceed the benchmark standard. While not all of the space would be private, the majority would be. Moreover, it would all be a useable shape and would appear to be generally representative of a number of other dwellings in the area.

Therefore, I find that the proposal would comply with the aims of Policy SC5 of the HLP which seeks to ensure that private external space that is usable and affords privacy and security with regards to benchmark external space standards and Policy CC2 of the HLP in so far as it requires development to have a positive impact on the amenity of current and future residents.

Energy use and carbon emissions

16. Policy EQ1 of the HLP seeks to minimise the demand for energy and promote renewable and low carbon technologies. It includes an expectation that all development proposals should meet the carbon emission reduction requirements set out in the LP. The Council indicate that Policy SI2 of the LP sets out that the development should be net zero-carbon and achieve a target of a minimum on-site carbon reduction of at least 35% beyond Building Regulations, to include a combination of energy efficiency and on-site carbon reduction measures, in accordance with the energy hierarchy.
17. Whilst the proposal would include fabric efficiency measures to achieve a minimum of 35% greenhouse gas emission reductions below the Building Regulations Part L baseline, it would not include any means of renewable energy generation. However, it is not clear why, having achieved the 35% through efficiency and reduction measures, further requirements are necessary in this case. In that regard it would accord with the aims of Policy SI2 of the LP and HLP Policy EQ1.

Conclusion

18. There would be no harm to living conditions and adequate energy efficiency measures could be incorporated into the development. These are neutral matters in the planning balance. I have found that there would be harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and, therefore, the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. Material considerations have not been shown to carry sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

E Worley

INSPECTOR