



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 September 2023

by B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/23/3318896

Land adjoining 19 Brindley Avenue, High Wycombe HP13 5SX

- 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 N Jutla (Narinder Management Ltd) against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
 - The application Ref 22/08039/FUL, dated 10 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as the 'erection of retail unit with flat above and construction of single storey rear extension and fire escape stairs.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of the end unit of a two storey parade of 6 ground floor commercial units with residential above. These face a car park, and the surrounding area is predominantly suburban residential in character.
4. The existing terrace has a simple pitched roof and consistency of finish and windows. Along with its uncomplicated form, this gives the terrace a rhythm and appearance which is reflected in the surrounding mostly consistent two-three storey pitched roof residential units. Whilst not in a sensitive location in terms of its designation, and limited in its architectural quality, this provides the surrounding street scene, including recent development immediately to the north, with a coherent and mostly uniform scale and appearance.
5. The proposed two storey extension to the southern end of the terrace would introduce a set back at first floor level to create a balcony area, which would result in a lowered ridge height and set down from the existing parade roof. I note that these elements are similar to a previously approved scheme on this site¹ and the frontage would retain the characteristic shop front. However, the first floor window pattern, introducing a large glazed double door to provide access to the balcony area, would also contrast with the existing consistent fenestration pattern, disrupting the established rhythm of the frontage.
6. Due to the staggered design and length of the rear projecting gable, the extension would have a convoluted appearance when viewed from the rear,

¹ Application reference 20/05708/FUL

detracting from the existing simple roof structure. Whilst broken up with fenestration and variation in materials, compared to the previously approved scheme, the depth and height of the rear gable projection would result in a massing facing Brindley Avenue that would appear excessive and would overwhelm the existing parade. Given its location, the development would appear as a prominent and conspicuous addition that would incongruously contrast and detract from the existing parade and its simple architectural form. The relocation of the external staircase would not mitigate this impact. It would also therefore detract from the established consistent character of the surrounding area.

7. The appellant references the development to the north on the corner of Anthony Close, however whilst this residential development provides a gable end with a pitched roof elevation facing Brindley Avenue, this development sits apart as a separate residential scheme, not as part of an existing parade. There is also no staggered or stepped roof element visible from the highway. As such, I do not consider that this is directly comparable to the scheme before me.
8. I acknowledge that the existing rear of the parade, with numerous air conditioning units, bin storage areas and various single storey projections, is utilitarian. Similarly, the existing side elevation, with hoarding around its perimeter, is unkempt and detracts from the street scene.
9. However, this does not justify the visual impact of the proposed extension, particularly given the design of the previously approved scheme referenced above, which is reduced in depth and, other than the external staircase, simpler in design.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019), which, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'), seeks to secure high quality design and requires development to create positive and attractive buildings which retains existing positive characteristics of the built context.

Other Matters

11. The proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would not accord with the development plan. However, the proposal would result in an additional unit of accommodation which would contribute to the Government's broader objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, in a location with access to facilities and services, as supported by the Framework. I also acknowledge that the development would make efficient use of the site and would be of an appropriate density.
12. The proposal would result in a short-term economic benefits arising from the construction process. Economic and social benefits are also likely to arise from the occupation of the new unit and the new commercial unit. However, given the quantum of development in this case, I give this matter limited weight. Whether the additional commercial unit would enhance the vitality of the parade is not substantiated, and there is no conclusive evidence that the proposal in front of me would provide greater benefits in this respect than the previously approved scheme.

13. I have taken full account of all the matters advanced in support of the proposal. However, due to the nature and scale of the appeal proposal, the benefits would be relatively limited. The support for the proposal in the Framework is countered by the importance it attaches to design as a key aspect of sustainable development. The proposal falls down in this respect.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate the development should be determined other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

B Phillips

INSPECTOR.