



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2023

by R Major BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/23/3318226

53 Suffolk Road, Harrow HA2 7QF

- 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 Nahyan Godil against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/3338/22, dated 22 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and all associated hardstanding and structures and replacement with new dwelling and associated and ancillary development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. An amended plan has been submitted with the appeal which omits the proposed outbuilding. I have determined the appeal based on the amended drawings as this would overcome the Council's third reason for refusal. No interested parties would be prejudiced by this approach.
3. In light of the amended plans the appellant has requested the description of the development be amended, however the description in the banner head above, which is taken from the application form, adequately describes the proposed development.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached two storey dwelling fronting Suffolk Road. Suffolk Road is predominantly characterised by detached dwellings built in the 'Metroland' style. The appeal property is typical of the development in the immediate surrounding area where properties are mostly designed with wide projecting curved two storey front bay windows, set back entrance porticos with catslide roofs and flat roof dormer features above. The mix of gable and hipped pitched tiled roofs with attractive overhanging eaves detail is also a feature of these dwellings.
6. Within the street there are a variety of materials on the buildings, which are generally used to similar effect. Dwellings follow a comparable building line and

include a gap to the sides of adjacent properties at first floor. Front gardens are mostly defined by low brick walls. These low walls, together with grass verges and street trees result in an open, spacious character to the street. Overall, there is a high level of consistency of design within the street scene, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

7. The replacement dwelling would respect the existing building line fronting onto Suffolk Road and has been designed to have regard, in a contemporary way, to some design features of the original dwelling and those in the street. The proposal has also been carefully considered to ensure that the window cill and head heights align with those of the existing properties either side, and the ratio of glazing in the front elevation is comparable.
8. Nevertheless, the various projecting and recessed elements, including the square three storey bay window in a strongly angular design would not sit comfortably with the curved bay windows of the typical houses adjacent to it. The additional height of the squared bay window, and second-floor front roof terrace, would be at odds with the appearance of the surrounding structures and as a three-storey flat roof property, would be out of keeping with the existing roofscape found on Suffolk Road. The second floor completed in white render would harmfully contrast with the tiled roofs of the adjacent properties. Consequently, the form and bulk of the proposed dwelling, its materials and detailing would not be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area, would appear prominent and incongruous when viewed from the road frontage and would look harmfully out of place.
9. The proposed front and flank boundary walls and solid timber gates, would enclose the front garden and would be notably different to the enclosure of adjacent sites, drawing attention to the development and resulting in some loss of the spaciousness within the street scene, adding to my concern about the harmful visual effects of the development.
10. The appellant has highlighted two properties on Suffolk Road (numbers 58 and 68) which have undergone a more modern transition. However, neither of these are comparable to the contemporary and flat roof design of the appeal proposal, as they both retain the curved bay window and the original roof form.
11. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would be contrary to Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021), Policy CS1 of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012), and Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies (2013), which require proposals to be of a high design standard and to respond to local distinctiveness and character having regard to matters such as massing, bulk, materials, layout, form, appearance and scale.
12. Furthermore, the proposal conflicts with the Harrow Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2010) where it seeks that the design and layout of new development should recognise the character of the area in which it is situated, and that new development should recognise the scale, massing and roof form of surrounding buildings and reflect these where they are a positive attribute of the area's character. The proposal would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework where it seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and history, and maintains a strong sense of place.

Other matters

13. The proposal is for a family home and not a House in Multiple Occupation, and the appeal has been determined on this basis.
14. The appellant refers to a Certificate of Lawful Development and an established fallback position. However, I have been provided with limited details of this fallback scheme and how it compares to the appeal proposal. Furthermore, I have been presented with no evidence of a reasonable prospect of this fallback position being implemented if the appeal was to be dismissed. As such, I can attribute little weight to the suggested fallback position.
15. There is the potential for the replacement dwelling to deliver energy efficiency and biodiversity enhancements, however I have insufficient evidence that the appeal proposal is the only means to achieve such efficiencies and enhancements. I therefore can only attach limited weight to the biodiversity proposals and the potential of the site to minimise energy consumption.
16. The appellant refers to a previous planning application dismissed at appeal¹. However, that appeal was in relation to various extensions and alterations to the dwelling and thus is significantly different to the current appeal proposal, and has therefore not been determinative.
17. I note the comments about the application process, however, I have considered this appeal based on its planning merits and in line with the relevant planning policies.
18. The appellant's comments in relation to the garden size, drainage issues and impact upon neighbouring properties, are noted. However, compliance with the development plan in these respects is a neutral matter.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight that indicate that the development should be determined otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

R Major

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/M5450/D/22/3303763