



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2024

by D Cleary MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/23/3334618

86 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone, Barnet, London N20 9EZ

- 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 John Bostock against the decision of the London Borough of Barnet Council.
 - The application Ref 23/3839/FUL, dated 06 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as the demolition of existing garage and construction of new three storey house. Roof extension to No.86 including rear dormer window and rooflights to front roofslope. Rear extension to No. 86. Associated alterations to hard and soft landscaping including provision of amenity space, refuse storage, cycle store, heat pump and off-street parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the decision was made by the Council, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published (19 December 2023). This does not materially change the planning policy context in respect of the main issue.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling, with hipped roof, projecting gable to front and linked garage to side. To the front of the property is an area of hardstanding for parking, with two points of access from the highway. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character and includes dwellings of varying type, form, scale and age. Notwithstanding this variety, the dwelling sits within a group of properties of similar appearance (Nos.86-98), which have a consistent building line and similar plot widths. Immediately adjacent to the appeal site is a large apartment development. The apartment building is set away from the appeal site, and slightly behind the building line, meaning the flank elevation of the site is exposed to the streetscene. The attached neighbour (No.88), has a side gable roof design, although the pairing remain visually well-balanced. At two storey level,

- dwellings are set in from their opposing side boundaries. The spacing to the side of the dwellings is characteristic to Nos.86 – 98.
5. The appeal site would be split in two, with the new dwelling proposed as a side extension to the existing property. The dwelling would fill the existing gap in its entirety, resulting in built form across three levels (including roof) on the site boundary. The mass of development would erode the existing characteristic spacing between the property and the site boundary, resulting in a development which would appear cramped within its plot. In addition, the siting of the dwelling on the boundary, without any off-set, would mean that its scale would appear visually dominant from the street.
 6. The proposals would result in a group of three terraced properties which would result in a pattern of development that is visually inconsistent with the existing grouping of Nos.86-98. Furthermore, the lack of any subservience in height or set back of the proposed dwelling, would result in the existing semi-detached pairing appearing heavily imbalanced. For these reasons, the dwelling would appear as an awkward and discordant addition within the street.
 7. The resultant plot width of the new dwelling would be much narrower than those within the group and, as such, would be inconsistent with the pattern of development of Nos.86-98. I acknowledge that there are dwellings within the surrounding area which have a width that would be comparable to the proposed dwelling. However, those cited are provided within a more recent housing development which are not visually read in conjunction with the appeal site. The appeal and its immediate surroundings are contextually different and, as such, I do not find those dwellings to be directly comparable.
 8. I note that the frontage would remain open and shared with no division between the existing and proposed dwellings. However, I do not consider that this would mitigate the cramped nature of the additional built form that I have identified above. In any event, the presence of the dwelling would be apparent from the street due to its design, with the main access located within the front elevation.
 9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the development conflicts with Policies CS NPPF, CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document (2012); Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document (2012); and, D3 of The London Plan (2021). Together, amongst other things, these seek to deliver sustainable development that is of high-quality design which respects the local context. The development also conflicts with the guidance contained within the Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: The Residential Design Guide (2016) which requires new residential development to respond to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development.
 10. However, in respect of the main issue, I do not find any particular conflict with the guidance contained within the Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Sustainable Design and Construction (2016).

Other Matters

11. I note that concern has been raised with regard to the Council relying on the advice contained within their pre-application advice¹. From the evidence before me, the proposals are similar in nature and a consistent approach to the development appears to have been taken by the Council. Nonetheless, any concerns regarding the handling of the application is a matter between the parties and, in any event, I have considered the appeal on its individual merits.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

D Cleary

INSPECTOR

¹ 23/8064/QCE