



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2025

by **M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/25/3358307

Manaton and Shanklin, Holden Avenue, North Finchley, London N12 8HX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Tang against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
- The application reference is 24/3877/FUL.
- The development proposed is the demolition of two existing semi-detached houses and the creation of 6 No self-contained units (Class C3(a)). The proposal includes associated cycle storage, parking and amenity area.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The new Barnet Local Plan ("the BLP") was adopted on 4 March 2025, replacing the 2012 version of that plan, the policies of which had been referred to on the decision notice issued by the Council. In view of the timing of this, which was after this appeal was lodged and the appellant's statement submitted, the appellant was given the opportunity to make representations relating to the new policies (though they opted not to do so). I have determined the appeal with reference to the up-to-date development plan.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future residents, with particular regard to the provision of outdoor amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Manaton and Shanklin are a pair of semi-detached houses; Manaton is the corner property at the junction of Holden Avenue and Holden Road although, notwithstanding the site address given above, the front of the two properties faces onto Holden Road. They are in a predominantly residential suburban area with considerable variety in the form of housing, though broadly speaking Holden Road is characterised by semi-detached and detached houses (albeit that some have evidently been converted into flats) including many from the Victorian and

Edwardian periods, while the adjacent part of Holden Avenue has several relatively recent purpose-built blocks of flats.

5. The appeal properties are, judging by their style, from the 1930s or thereabouts; their appearance is consistent with the two neighbouring pairs of semi-detached houses to the east at Nos 30, 30A, 30B and 30C Holden Road. Manaton and Shanklin have evidently been given hip-to-gable loft conversions at some point¹, and they have large rear box dormers. Manaton has single-storey extensions (including a conservatory) at the rear of the ground floor, as well as a double garage accessed from Holden Avenue.
6. The proposed development is the demolition of the existing houses, and the erection in their place of a block of six self-contained flats. There would be a pair of gables on the front elevation to Holden Road; these would be set below the main roof ridge and so would be subordinate in scale to the rest of the building, but although gables are used elsewhere in the area, here they would represent a jarring break of character when considered alongside the broadly consistent group of 1930s semis. The proposed front balconies would also be an incongruous feature in the Holden Road streetscene.
7. The two-storey side gable elevation to Holden Avenue would be deeper than that of the existing property, and the building would also be set closer to the street than at present. These features would give the building a dominant and overbearing form at the entrance to Holden Avenue; it would close down and cramp what is currently (notwithstanding the presence of several conifers forming a dense screen above Manaton's boundary fence) a relatively open part of the streetscape.
8. Because of its massing, design and siting, I consider that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policy CDH01 of the 2025 BLP, and Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021; while these policies seek to optimise the capacity of sites to make the most efficient use of land (which may include increasing the density of development where appropriate), they require proposals to demonstrate high-quality design, including being sympathetic to local character, and the scale, massing and form of the existing context.

Living conditions

9. Policy CDH07 of the 2025 BLP requires the provision of a minimum of 5m² of private outdoor space for 1-2 person dwellings, with an extra 1m² for each additional occupant; it also emphasises that amenity space should be fit for purpose. The Council's 2016 *Residential Design Guidance* Supplementary Planning Document ("the SPD") provides further guidance, including that private gardens should provide adequate space for day to day uses such as a table and chairs for outdoor dining, clothes drying, relaxation and safe children's play (where family accommodation is proposed), and that communal amenity space should (among other things) have a clearly defined purpose and be designed to reflect this. While some flexibility in respect of amenity space standards may be appropriate where higher density development is proposed, the SPD is still clear that communal spaces should provide a private, attractive, functional and safe environment.

¹ As has No 30B.

10. The proposed block would have two flats on each of its three floors. Flats 3 and 4 on the first floor would have balconies (three for Flat 3, two for Flat 4) which would provide private outdoor amenity space for the occupiers of those units. The other four flats would not have private amenity space. There would be an area of communal amenity space, mainly given to lawn (although also incorporating footpaths and cycle parking), wrapping around the western end of the property.
11. I have not been provided with a precise figure for the external amenity space but, by the appellant's calculation (which the Council has not disputed) it would measure more than 100m². The appellant considers that this would be more than adequate to meet the needs of future residents. However, the space would be narrow, especially between the side elevation of the building and Holden Avenue, and much of it would also be likely to be overshadowed by the trees and hedges around parts of the site boundary which, the submitted plans and artistic impressions suggest, would be retained. While the provision of on-site outdoor amenity space might well meet the quantitative requirements of the development plan, its siting and layout mean that it would not be well-suited to meeting residents' day-to-day needs in qualitative terms.
12. Furthermore, the amenity space would be sited very close to the windows of the habitable rooms within Unit 1, and relatively remote from the other flats. It is therefore conceivable that, if residents of the block *were* to make full use of the amenity space, there would be potential for noise disturbance and suchlike leading to conflict between them.
13. I acknowledge that there are public open spaces – notably Riverside Park and the Dollis Valley Greenway – reasonably close to the appeal site. However, public spaces such as parks do not meet occupiers' needs for private, or semi-private, amenity space in the same way as private, or semi-private, amenity spaces – to take an obvious example, they cannot usually be used for hanging washing out to dry. The presence of the parks would not overcome the deficiencies of on-site amenity space for the occupiers of the development.
14. I conclude that, because of shortcomings in the quality and functionality of the communal amenity space, the proposed development would not provide acceptable living conditions for future residents. There would therefore be conflict with Policies CDH01 and CDH07 of the 2025 BLP, and Policy D6 of the London Plan 2021; together, and among other things, these policies seek to ensure that development is designed to a high standard which provides a high standard of amenity including by ensuring the provision of adequate and fit-for-purpose outdoor amenity space.

Other Matter

15. The submitted Design and Access Statement, and both main parties' appeal evidence, made reference to an earlier scheme which was the subject of a dismissed appeal decision (PINS Ref: APP/N5090/W/23/3321657). Although the appellant considers that this proposal has addressed the reasons for which that appeal was dismissed, I have not been provided with any further information about that earlier scheme. I have assessed this proposal on its own planning merits, and found harm as described above.

Conclusion

16. The development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers of all flats within the scheme. The proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole.
17. No material considerations have been put to me to indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector