



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2022

by S Edwards BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/21/3284627

16 High Street, Northwood HA6 1BN

- 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 S Patel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 61876/APP/2021/1262, dated 25 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed single storey rear extension to existing Restaurant (Use Class A3/E(b)), demolition of existing rear outbuilding, alteration to rear Flower store / workshop (Use Class E(g)(iii)) and proposed additional first floor storey to rear for residential use (Use Class C3)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character;
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with particular regard to outlook, daylight and sunlight; and
 - Whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers of the development, with particular regard to outlook and daylight.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site lies within an area of mixed character, which is predominantly made of dwellinghouses on the western side of the High Street and a parade of shops, with residential accommodation in the upper floors on the eastern side. Many of the commercial premises have rear service yards, which in some instances also include single storey outbuildings.
4. The site forms part of the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character (ASLC) which illustrates the early Victorian and Edwardian development of Northwood. As detailed in the supporting text to Policy DMHB 5 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies¹ (LPP2), an

¹ Adopted January 2020.

ASLC is a non-designated local heritage asset that has a character and identity valued by local residents, and which the Council wishes to preserve or enhance.

5. The appeal building is a terraced property set within a narrow plot, which comprises a restaurant at ground floor level and an apartment above. There is a single storey workshop towards the rear of the site, which is presently occupied by a florist. Whilst the building has been subject to a number of alterations and extensions, the modest scale of the buildings and size of the plot reflect the character and appearance of the Old Northwood ASLC.
6. By reason of its excessive footprint, scale, massing and bulk relative to the size of the plot, the proposed extension would overwhelmingly dominate the rear service yard and would also detract from the prevailing pattern of development in the area. The harm which would be caused by the appeal scheme would be exacerbated by the incongruous and contrived design of the proposed roof form in particular, which would have a disjointed appearance and lack subservience to the main building.
7. Whilst my attention has been drawn to a similar development which has been constructed at no 20 B High Street (no 20 B), no substantive evidence has been presented to demonstrate that it has been granted planning permission. Regardless of whether the proposal would be taller or not, the existing built form at no 20 does not in my view provide justification for the development of other structures of a similar or greater scale, where they are found to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. I accept that the development would not be widely prominent within the public realm along the High Street, but it would nevertheless be visible from neighbouring properties, including those fronting Hillard Road.
8. The appeal scheme would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the wider Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character. It would therefore be contrary to Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies² (LPP1), Policies DMHB 1, DMHB 5, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the LPP2, Policies D3, D4 and D6 of the London Plan³, but also Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These require development proposals to be designed to the highest standards, whilst reflecting the character of the ASLC and its original layout.

Living conditions – Neighbouring residents

9. The proposed two-storey built form would be situated at sufficient distance away from existing residential properties to ensure that it does not appear overbearing to neighbouring residents, or cause a harmful loss of sunlight and daylight. However, the first floor bedroom windows sited to the southern elevation of the development, together with the open staircase providing access to the flat, would enable clear views onto the adjacent sites, and from a modest distance.
10. This would cause a loss of privacy to the occupiers of these neighbouring properties, which would have a detrimental effect on their living conditions. The appeal scheme would consequently conflict with Policy BE1 of the LPP1 and Policy DMHB 11 of the LLP2, which states that development proposals should

² Adopted November 2012.

³ 2021.

not adversely impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open space.

11. Moreover, I share the concerns raised by the Council regarding the effect that the proposal could have on adjoining sites. In that respect, the appeal scheme would be contrary to Policy DMHB 11c) of the LPP2, which requires that the design of new proposals safeguards the satisfactory re-development of any adjoining sites which have development potential.

Living conditions – Future occupiers

12. Whilst the size of the proposed two-bedroom flat would accord with the requirements of the London Plan, the layout and configuration of the internal living space are also important considerations to establish whether a good standard of living accommodation would be provided for future occupiers. The new dwelling would include a disproportionate amount of hall space, and the bedrooms would appear constrained, with limited circulation space. I also note that the windows would be small and having regard to the available information, it is unclear whether those serving habitable rooms would all be openable, to ensure adequate ventilation.
13. Due to the tightly constrained nature of the site, most of the openings would be situated to the southern elevation of the new dwelling. This would be at odds with the Mayor of London's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Housing⁴, which seeks to minimise the development of single aspect dwellings. Dual aspect dwellings, which are fitted with openable windows on two external walls, either on opposite sides of a dwelling or on adjacent sides, are considered preferable.
14. The eastern and western facing windows would provide additional light to the living area, but the outlook from these openings and the daylight/sunlight would be restricted due to their size and proximity to the adjacent walls. Future occupiers of the development would not therefore be provided with a suitable dual aspect. Due to the flat's layout and the size of the openings, and in the absence of windows on any of the remaining elevations, it is likely that future occupiers would have to rely excessively on artificial light, thus resulting in a poor standard of accommodation.
15. Cumulatively, these considerations lead me to conclude that the proposal would fail to provide a satisfactory living environment for future occupiers of the development, having particular regard to outlook and daylight, but also the internal arrangement of the flat. Accordingly, it would conflict with the housing quality and standards set out in Policy D6 of the London Plan and the Mayor of London's SPG on Housing. The appeal scheme would also fail to accord with the design aims of Policy DMHB 11 of the LPP2. By reason of the scale of the appeal scheme, I however find no conflict with Policy SI 2 of the London Plan, which seeks to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, and is primarily applicable to major development proposals.

Conclusion

16. The appeal scheme would enable the enhancement of the commercial premises, and thus improve their viability, whilst also enabling the reuse of previously developed land. However, these benefits would be outweighed by

⁴ March 2016.

the harm which I have identified. There are no material considerations, which indicate that the appeal should be determined, other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons detailed above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR