



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 August 2018

by Caroline Mulloy BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 3 September 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/18/3198847

51 Wieland Road, Northwood HA6 3QX

- 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 Nadeem Boghani against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 17990/APP/2017/3191, dated 1 September 2017, was refused by notice dated 4 January 2018.
 - The development proposed is replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the submission of the appeal a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2018. The main parties have been consulted on the implications of the new Framework for the current appeal and their responses have been taken into account in my reasoning below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street and the Gate Hill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises of a large detached property situated on the south eastern side of Wieland Road and within the Gatehill Farm Estate (the Estate). Originally conceived in the style and principles of the 'Garden City' movement, the estate was developed from the 1930's through to the 1960's, with development continuing on a more sporadic basis into the 1980's. The Character Assessment: Gatehill Farm Estate-Proposed Conservation Area (CA) of the estate describes the area's character as being largely derived from its planned layout, low density streetscape and a number of large, attractive and well detailed detached houses. Due to the incremental development of the estate the CA recognises that the houses vary in individual design and style.
5. The appeal property is a substantial vernacular style house dating from the 1930's and comprised of red brown brick and tile, asymmetrical in design with gables, projecting wings and casement windows fronting onto a wide, shared grass verge. It is representative of properties of this era which the CA identifies as being built in red/brown brick or rendered with half-timbered details and dark red/brown clay roof tiles. The gables, tall chimneys, tile hanging, porches and dormers with barge boards contribute to the 'Arts and Crafts' appearance of the area. Larger plots developed in the 1960's are of a simpler design and of lesser architectural interest.

The spacing between houses, landscaping and views into back gardens all form part of the setting and special character of the area.

6. It is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling and erect a replacement three storey seven bedroom detached dwelling including the habitable roofspace and a basement with associated parking and amenity space. The proposal would broadly maintain the building line along the south-eastern side of Wieland Road and it would also retain the existing open frontage. It would also have a similar width to larger properties on the estate. There would be slightly greater separation to the boundaries than would be achieved were the planning permission¹ to extend the property be implemented. Some views would, therefore, be retained through to the rear gardens.
7. The proposal would have a greater footprint than the existing property; however, there is no evidence before me to support the assertion by the Council and third parties that the dwelling would be substantially larger than nearby properties or that it would result in a cramped form of development.
8. Concerns have been raised that the proposed crown roof would appear bulky and dominant; however, the proposed dwelling would be a broadly similar height as the existing and surrounding properties and the distance from the eaves of the roof to the ridge would also be similar. In addition, I noted several crown roofs in the vicinity. Furthermore, the roof would mimic the predominant hipped roof form of surrounding properties when viewed from the front. These factors weigh in favour of the proposal.
9. Nonetheless, this particular section of Wieland Road predominately dates from the early period of the estate. Whilst there are a variety of designs and some of the original properties have been replaced with newer dwellings, the majority of properties are asymmetrical in design with interesting facades comprising of projecting wings, porches, hanging tiles and other architectural features. These features reflect the Arts and Crafts origins of the estate and, together with the consistency of layout, contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area.
10. Whilst the height of the proposal would be comparable to the existing dwelling; the overall width when taken together with the crown roof and wide windows would result in a dwelling with a squat appearance. Furthermore, it would present a bland and symmetrical façade to the street and the large blocks of glazing would result in a higher void to solid ratio than is typical of the area. As a result, the facade would not reflect that of surrounding properties which generally have a more vertical emphasis with asymmetrical features and a higher solid to void ratio with glazing broken up by glazing bars. Moreover, the lack of visual relief contrasts markedly with the interesting and detailed architectural features of surrounding properties which give light and shade to their facades. These factors weigh against the proposal.
11. On balance, whilst the mass, scale and siting are reflective of the existing and surrounding properties, I consider that the plain, robust, and symmetrical façade combined with the horizontal proportions and dominant blocks of fenestration would be in stark contrast to the animated facades of surrounding properties. The proposal would, therefore, represent an incongruous addition at odds with the character and appearance of the area.
12. Attention is drawn to a recent appeal decision² which was allowed for a replacement dwelling on the same site. Whilst the proposal would have a similar footprint, mass

¹ Application reference 17990/APP/2015/645

² Appeal reference: APP/R5510/W/17/3179502

and bulk as the current appeal proposal it would, nevertheless, have a more animated façade, a higher solid to void ratio and some architectural detailing such as a porch and chimney stacks which would provide visual interest. Consequently, and despite the classical symmetry, it would have greater synergy with surrounding properties than the current appeal proposal. This case is not, therefore, directly comparable to the appeal proposal.

13. I acknowledge the Inspector's comments that the previous proposal would merely reflect the varied architectural styles on the estate. I also note criterion iii of saved Policy BE6 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan which states that within the Gate Hill Farm estate new houses should reflect the materials, design features and architectural style predominant in the area and sufficient architectural variety must be achieved within new development in order to retain the areas' characteristics of large individually designed houses. However, whilst I acknowledge the scope for individual design, the proposal would fail to harmonise with the existing street scene or contribute to high quality, individual new design on the estate.
14. Furthermore, paragraph 127 of the Framework seeks to ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment whilst not preventing appropriate innovation or change. In my judgement, the proposal neither reflects the character or history of the surrounding environment nor represents innovation in design.
15. Attention is drawn to a planning application which was approved for a replacement dwelling at number 33 Wieland Road. However, I note that whilst this proposal would have a modern design, the dwelling would be more vertically proportioned and it would be stepped at the side. Furthermore, the fenestration would create an interesting design feature in itself as opposed to simple, solid blocks of glazing. Overall, the proposed dwelling would have a bold, modern appearance with an animated façade creating significant visual interest. This case is not directly comparable to the appeal proposal which limits the weight which I can attach to it in my Decision.
16. For the reasons stated, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the street and the Gate Hill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One-Strategic Policies and saved Policies BE5, BE6, BE13 and BE19 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which collectively seek to secure forms of development that harmonise with the existing street scene or other features of the local area. Saved Policy BE15 of the UDP relates to the alteration or extension of existing buildings and so is not directly applicable to the appeal proposal.

Other matters

17. The proposal may provide increased and improved living accommodation for future occupants; however, this benefit is significantly outweighed by the harm which I have identified.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons stated and taking all other considerations into account the appeal should be dismissed.

Caroline Mulloy

Inspector