
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 September 2021

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/21/3275918

Land Between 85 & 85A Larch Crescent, Hayes UB4 9EB

- 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 J S Hayer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 21521/APP/2020/3641, dated 2 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is construction of single storey, one-bedroom house with associated parking, amenity space and installation of vehicular crossover to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Revised versions of the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) were published in March and July 2021 respectively, and the main parties were given the opportunity to submit comments. The 2021 version of the Framework is referred to in the decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effect of the proposal on public and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located in a predominantly residential area and accommodates 85 and 85A Larch Crescent. At the time of the appeal site visit, approved adjoining single storey extensions between the two properties had been erected but the internal layouts and front and rear elevations had not been completed¹. The approved schemes are for neighbouring garages, with No 85A's set further back in the street scene than No 85's. The single storey and ancillary nature of the garages would provide a suitably designed and visually comfortable link between the two storey end of terrace form of No 85, and the previously detached two storey form of No 85A.

¹ Council Refs: 21521/APP/2020/1290 and 75542/APP/2020/1288

5. The proposed new dwelling would occupy the existing built form of the extensions with the front elevation having two windows and a door. In contrast to the design of the approved garages, the resulting single storey bungalow style dwelling, located between the neighbouring properties with a markedly different two storey scale and character, would appear awkward and incongruous. It would also lead to the wider row of properties having a disjointed appearance, and this would be emphasised by the dwelling's stepped front elevation appearing as an anomaly within the group. Moreover, a portion of one of No 85A's parking spaces and the adjoining section of the boundary fence would occupy a substantial part of the area located between the front door and the back edge of the pavement. Consequently, the new dwelling would have an unduly cramped appearance in the street scene.
6. The appellant notes there are bungalows sited across the road from the appeal site. However, the terrace of bungalows read as a cohesive group of properties. They also have fairly substantial dual pitched roofs, in stark contrast to the proposed dwelling which would have a low false pitched roof to the front and a flat roof behind. Accordingly, the presence of the bungalows within the same street scene does not justify the scheme.
7. In light of the above, the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would conflict with Policy BE1 of the Council's 2012 adopted Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Policies, and Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of its 2020 adopted Local Plan Part 2 Development Management Policies (DMP). Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure high quality design which harmonises with the local context, taking into account the scale of surrounding development, and which makes a positive contribution to the local area in terms of layout, form and scale.

Public and highway safety

8. While the Council has expressed concern in terms of accessing the proposed parking spaces with the crossover arrangement shown in the submitted plans, it has not sought to clarify the precise nature of the deficiency in this regard. The crossovers that would serve No 85A and the proposed dwelling already exist and they would appear to enable suitable access to the respective parking spaces. What is shown as an existing 1m high front garden wall on the submitted plans at No 85 could have acted as a constraint to accessing one of the parking spaces from the proposed new crossover for that property. However, the relevant section of wall has since been removed.
9. Consequently, as the proposed crossover arrangement would enable the parking spaces to be accessed, the development would not have a harmful effect on public and highway safety. As such, it would comply with Policies DMT 2 and DMT 6 of the DMP. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure development does not contribute to a deterioration of safety for road users and residents, and that parking standards are complied with.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has drawn attention to the fact the size of the approved garages would be slightly substandard having regard to the dimensions specified in the DMP. However, the Council were aware of this when they approved the developments, noting that the garages would not be relied upon for parking

given the front driveways would be large enough to accommodate two cars. The substandard nature of the garages therefore carries little weight in the appeal.

Planning Balance

11. Notwithstanding the finding on public and highway safety, the harm to the character and appearance of the area, and the subsequent conflict with the development plan, are matters which are afforded substantial weight.
12. Benefits of the proposal include the provision of an additional market dwelling. There would also be economic benefits associated with the conversion work and the dwelling's subsequent occupation, including spending at local shops and services. However, as the net gain is just one dwelling, it would make a very limited contribution to the local housing supply and the economy. The cumulative benefits of the proposal are therefore only afforded very limited weight and they are insufficient to outweigh the adverse impacts of the scheme.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, including relevant parts of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

C J Ford

INSPECTOR