
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/22/3308996

4 Rofant Road, Hillingdon, Northwood HA6 3BE

- 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 Vhora against the decision of London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 6923/APP/2022/1490, dated 9 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is single dwelling house.
-

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 street scene; and
 - Local landscaping as a result of impact on trees.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a traditional two storey semi-detached dwelling located at the entrance into Ashbourne Square, in a corner position. The surrounding vernacular is a mix of both modern and traditional housing of differing styles and types set in a verdant landscape. In relation to the appeal site, a detached garage building is positioned along the boundary of the site with the road leading to Ashbourne Square.
4. The existing garage would be removed and part of the garden severed to position a standalone dwelling with its own garden. This garage has a subservience to the main dwelling and helps to retain a sense of spaciousness around the dwelling, similar to its attached half. The corner location of the semi's increases their surrounding space.
5. A new dwelling would however remove this sense of spaciousness. In addition, it would be set back from the front building line of the main dwelling. In this precise position, it would appear separate and disjointed as a single dwelling, at odds with the forward building line of the pair of semi's to which it would share a close relationship. I note that whilst there is some irregularity to building lines seen within close range, a dwelling in this position would be incongruous in this specific context.

6. Furthermore, whilst there are differing house types, ages and styles all around the appeal site, and some are set back into their plot, and even if the proposal would be set in from the boundaries, those referred to by the appellant are of a very different characteristic. The precise characteristics of the appeal proposal would not reasonably compare.
7. I could see from its proposed design that design cues have been taken from local vernacular although the side elevation contains little articulation. It would be highly visible along the estate road into Ashbourne Square as well as in views from Rofant Road. The side elevation would add little interest to the more characterful setting to which it would be experienced within.
8. All these factors would lead to the proposal appearing prominent within the streetscene due to its poor integration. The screening properties of the landscape would not mitigate the harm. It would thus appear detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene.
9. Therefore, to conclude on this main issue, the proposal would not meet the design expectations of Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One Strategic and Policies (2012), Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMH 6 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020). In addition, it would fail to comply with Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) in their combined aims to achieve good design.

Impact on trees

10. The public and private landscaping around the local area adds to the leafy landscape context. A tree preservation order (TPO 30) exists to protect local trees. It is confirmed by the parties that two street trees T4 and T5, located within the adopted highway and within the area of protected trees, are required to be removed to accommodate the vehicular access into the site.
11. The trees are identified as category B trees and are healthy specimens, early mature and of moderate quality according to the submitted tree report. The two trees proposed for removal are part of a linear landscape feature which adds to the visual amenity value of the street scene. They are seen in longer range views and contribute positively to the verdant character.
12. Loss of the trees would therefore harm the character and appearance of the local area. The appellant has suggested replacement planting as mitigation means. However, it would take many years for the replacement trees to reach the same scale as the others in the line. Furthermore, and had I reached an alternative view on the visual value of the trees, no mechanism to secure replacement planting has been advanced by the appellant.
13. I note the Council refer to other trees that would not be safeguarded as a result of the proposal. However, even if I were to agree with the Council's findings on the matter, I have not found in favour of the proposal in relation to the loss of street trees to which I apportion substantial weight.
14. Therefore, to conclude on this main issue, the proposed development would negatively affect tree cover and would harm the amenity of the area. This would not meet the broad objectives of Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 14 that aims to protect features of positive value, and to protect landscape features of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Development Management Policies

(2020), and the same broad objectives of Policies G1 and G7 of the London Plan (2021). In addition, the proposal would not comply with the overarching aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) to achieve well designed places.

Conclusion

15. I have found that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole and there are no other considerations that outweigh this conflict. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR

