
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2019

by Tim Crouch MSc DipUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: Wednesday, 20 March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/18/3215432

Grove Bay, Grove Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex, UB8 3RG

- 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 C Gill against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 73172/APP/2018/992, dated 12 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2018.
 - The development proposed is 2 x two and a half storey, 4-bed semi-detached dwellings, with associated parking and installation of vehicular crossovers, involving demolition of existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development was changed during the course of the application, by agreement of both parties. I have used the amended description in my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are firstly, the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and secondly, whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for the future occupants with particular regard to outside amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Grove Lane is a fairly narrow residential street. The buildings mainly comprise 2 storey semi-detached buildings and bungalows. These are positioned close to each other, with open front gardens mainly used for parking. The properties close to the appeal site are separated by boundary hedging and landscape features.
5. Whilst not a designated townscape or landscape of specific significance, the Lane does have some charm derived from the scale and relationship of the narrow street, open frontages, boundary features and building heights. There is some mixture of development types, but the buildings are up to 2 storeys in this area which contributes to this suburban scale.

6. The proposal is for the replacement of the existing bungalow with a pair of semi-detached 2 and a half storey townhouses. The proposal seeks to reflect the existing building line and proposes materials the appellant considers to be broadly consistent with the area. It also would be set off the boundaries by an acceptable amount such that it would accord with policy BE22 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two (2012). However, the height and tall proportions of the proposed townhouses would appear at odds with the local character. Despite their domestic design they do not respect the particular scale of the street. Whilst there is some change in heights between the bungalows and 2 storey dwellings locally, a building with an additional half storey as proposed would have a dominant and detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. This would be exacerbated by its positioning slightly forward and at an angle to the neighbouring properties to the north.
7. The proposal would therefore have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area due to its height, scale and positioning. Consequently it would be contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (2012), saved policies BE13 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two (2012), policies 7.1 and 7.4 of the London Plan (2016), the Mayor of London's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) - Housing (2016), the adopted Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Residential Layouts and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018). Taken together, these require new development to be of a high quality design, to harmonise with the existing area and help reinforce the character of the neighbourhood.

Living conditions

8. The adopted *HDAS SPD* sets a minimum guideline for gardens of 4 bedroom properties of 100 square metres (SqM). There is some disagreement regarding the exact measurements of the gardens proposed. However, even if I was to accept the appellant's larger figure of approximately 80SqM (when not including the proposed conservatories or space to the side of the dwellings which don't contribute to the useable garden area) this is substantially below the minimum figure. Also, given the existing tall mature landscaping within the garden and height of the building proposed, the garden areas feel enclosed. Whilst allowing for personal preferences of future occupiers and availability of open space in the wider locality, I nonetheless consider that the usable private space to be enjoyed by future residents would not be of sufficient size or quality.
9. Therefore the proposal would not provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers in respect of outdoor amenity space. Consequently, the proposed development would conflict with saved policies BE23 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two (2012), London Plan Policy 3.5 and the Council's SPD which, in combination, seek to ensure that new dwellings provide external amenity space which is sufficient to protect the amenity of future occupants.

Other Matter

10. The proposal would add an additional dwelling in a sustainable location and bring some economic benefit to the area during construction and through supporting local facilities. These would be very modest benefits, in an area where there is no shortage of housing, and attract little weight.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tim Crouch

INSPECTOR