
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2022

by G Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/22/3290650

11 Warwick Road, West Drayton UB7 9BT

- 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 John Fenton against the decision of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 9746/APP/2021/2542, dated 17 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey extension above the existing commercial ground floor building for residential purposes comprising of 4 x 1-bed 2 person units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In submitting the appeal, the appellant has sought to respond to the Council's concern that the submitted plans do not accurately reflect the scale of the adjacent Pullman Court building. To this end, revised elevations¹ have been submitted which purport to show the 'as built' heights of that building relative to the appeal proposal. The Council have not challenged the appellant in this respect, and I have therefore considered the proposal on this basis.
3. However, the appellant has also submitted an alternative scheme referred to as 'option 2'². This shows the extended building with an amended roofline with eaves and ridge levels below those of Pullman Court and, as a consequence, a more proportionate step between the end terrace building at 9 Warwick Road Pullman Court. However, the '*Procedural Guide – Planning Appeals – England*' is clear that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme. It goes on to state that it is important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the local planning authority.
4. It is clear that the 'Option 2' plans were submitted with the appeal and were not therefore the plans on which interested person's views were sought. In the interests of fairness and having regard to the Wheatcroft Principles³ I have not considered the 'Option 2' plans in my determination of this appeal.

¹ Drwg Nos: SES-000-1-NWE Rev1 and SES-000-1-ESE Rev1

² Drwg Nos: SES-000-1-NWE Rev2 and SES-000-1-ESE Rev2

³ Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE [JPL 1982 P37]

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site lies within a residential area of varied architectural style and scale. A previous Inspector's⁴ description to the site lying at a point of transition within Warwick Road seems to me, having viewed the site and its surrounds, as being particularly apt. On the outside of a sharp corner, the single storey building currently occupying the appeal site contrasts with a short two-storey terraced block on one side and a more modern three / four storey building on the other. Opposite lies another modern three / four storey building whilst on the inside of the corner are a handful of bungalows.
7. The previous Inspector and the Council both note that the step change in scale and character is most evident in views from the south of the appeal site looking north. Certainly, the front portion of the single storey white flank elevation is part of an active building line articulated by ground floor bays of the terraced block, and the three storey bays of the larger building beyond. However, the appeal site's point of transition is also particularly noticeable from the east of the site looking west along Warwick Road towards the appeal site.
8. The appeal site lies approximately mid-way along a street elevation with a broadly consistent, if heavily punctuated, building line established by the short two-storey terraced block and the larger Pullman Court building beyond. Although the existing single storey building projects slightly forward of the prevailing building line, it does not do so significantly, particularly given the repetition and rhythm of the bays on the buildings on either side of it. The existing building is thus very much consistent with the prevailing form of this side of Warwick Road.
9. The proposal would use the existing single storey building as the basis upon which to build upwards, the alignment of the front elevation's upper floors following that of the existing ground floor. This would result, as the appellant accepts, the projection of the building's upper floors beyond the established façade of No 9 (and its adjoining terraced properties) and also that of Pullman Court.
10. Whilst the existing building already stands forward of this line modestly it does so modestly, its single storey scale not dissimilar to that of the single storey bay windows of the adjacent terrace. It is unobtrusive. The proposed two storey extension would not be. Whilst I have noted the appellant's efforts to respond to the previous Inspector's comments regarding the form of the development and its blank south elevation, I am not persuaded as to their success.
11. The additional scale, height and bulk of the extended upper floors would be disruptive and incongruous within the street when viewed from the south, being altogether more angular and cumbersome than the softer (and smaller) bays. The incorporation of brickwork at upper floor with render below would help break up the elevation to a limited degree, but the result would

⁴ APP/R5510/W/18/3192706

nevertheless still result in an intrusive and awkward juxtaposition with No. 9 and its terraced block.

12. A step change between the lower level of the terraced houses and the larger scale of Pullman Court beyond would not, in principle, be harmful. The site is, after all, recognised as being at a point of transition between buildings of differing styles and scales. However, the appellant has acknowledged that the originally submitted plans downplayed the scale of the proposal relative to Pullman Court by overstating the latter's overall height. Updated plans purport to correct this.
13. Nevertheless, because of the prominence that the building would gain within the Warwick Road environment as a consequence of the extension, its scale, height and bulk would also be incongruous as a bridge between the buildings of differing scale on either side of it. This would be seen both in views from the south along the face of the terrace, but also from the east where the building would present both an abrupt step change from the smaller terrace to the south, as well as being uncomfortably taller than Pullman Court to the east. Whilst the three storey Warwick Road frontage of Kitchener House would provide a degree of foreground scale and context in these views, the awkward mismatch in scale in relation to its neighbours would compound the extended buildings incongruous appearance and discordant effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
14. For the reasons set out therefore, the proposed development would be contrary to Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 (LP1) policy BE1, Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 (LP2) policies DMHB11 and DMHB12 and London Plan policies D4 and D8. Together, these policies seek to ensure that new development is of the highest standard and of good design which, amongst other things, harmonises with local context by taking account of the surrounding scale of development, considers the height of adjacent structures and takes account of building lines, rooflines and streetscape. The proposal falls short in these respects.

Other Matters

15. Although neither main party has submitted details of housing land supply within the Borough, the appellant states that the Council is able to demonstrate a 5-year supply, a position that the Council have not sought to challenge. The proposal would deliver an additional four flats on a small site in a well-located position close to services, facilities and public transport links.
16. The presence of a 5-year housing land supply is not an upper limit however and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out the Government's aim of significantly boosting the supply of homes. A further four homes would contribute to these aims and carries weight in support of the proposal, as does making efficient use of land and retaining an existing business use within the ground floor of the extended building, all in an accessible location.
17. I note too, that the Council do not object to the proposal in terms of effect on living conditions of existing neighbouring properties, the quality or quantity of internal living accommodation and outdoor amenity space, or the effect on pedestrian and highway safety, including the provision of car parking. These are, however, neutral matters and weigh neither in support of nor against the proposed development.

Conclusion

18. There are, as the previous Inspector also noted, elements of the proposal worthy of note. There are also aspects of the proposal that do not weigh against it. However, the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and as such would be contrary to the development plan and the Framework when taken as a whole. These other matters raised are not material considerations sufficient to persuade me of a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.
19. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Robbie

INSPECTOR