

Section '4' - Applications recommended for REFUSAL or DISAPPROVAL OF DETAILS

Application No : 15/03083/FULL1

Ward:
Hayes And Coney Hall

Address : 56 Harvest Bank Road West Wickham
BR4 9DJ

OS Grid Ref: E: 540117 N: 165091

Applicant : Mr & Mrs Liney

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Erection of 3 storey three bedroom dwellinghouse on land adjacent to no 56. Harvest Bank Road with associated parking and terraces.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
Smoke Control SCA 51

Proposal

The application site is formed from the severed side garden of No. 56 Harvest Bank Road and measures 330 square metres. The severance plot is irregular in shape and measures 11m wide at the front, increasing to 12.2m wide at the front drive position, before narrowing to 9.8m at the rear of the proposed dwelling.

It is proposed to erect a detached dwellinghouse on the land to the side/front of the host dwelling. The dwelling would have a one/two storey appearance from the front, increasing to 3 storeys at the rear to follow the slope of the site. To the rear of the dwelling a large terrace would be provided at ground floor level (first floor equivalent) which would be approx. 4m deep and would lie above the lower ground floor sitting area which forms part of the master bedroom. The master bedroom would have a single aspect to the rear.

The elevated and lower terraces would incorporate a louvered screen on the eastern side to limit overlooking to the east.

A further terrace would be provided at the rear of the master bedroom suite.

On the ground floor, an open plan kitchen/living/dining area would be provided with glazing to the rear elevation and a side door from a utility area to the front driveway.

On the first floor two further en-suite bedrooms are proposed, again with a single aspect to the rear of the dwelling. The glazing to the front elevation of the dwelling would serve the stairwell and ground floor entrance hall.

In terms of the separation provided to the boundaries of the site, due to the orientation of the property and the irregular shape of the site, at a pinch point on the western boundary of the site a side space of 0.8m would be provided to the boundary with the neighbouring property at No. 52 at lower ground floor level. A side space of 1.2m would be retained to the eastern boundary of the site with the host dwelling at No.56. A rear garden of approx. 17m depth (including the areas accommodating the raised terraces) would be provided.

The proposal would be of contemporary design, with a mixture of vertical timber cladding, zinc and aluminium used on the external surfaces of the dwelling. Clerestory glazing is proposed, to provide additional lighting to the first floor and ground floor.

The application is supported by a BS 5837 tree report.

Location

The application site lies on the southern side of the upper level of Harvest Bank Road. Harvest Bank Road is a suburban residential street which has 2 distinct parts. The lower level is characterised by modest semi detached dwellings and has a distinct suburban character with a tarmaced road.

To the north west, the road bends sharply back on itself, the road is unmade and the ground level rises. Dwellings in the upper section of the road are characteristically semi-detached on the southern side and detached on the northern side and are of a variety of styles. The section of the street within which the application site lies comprises 5 pairs of semi-detached mainly flat roofed post-war dwellings which are reasonably consistently positioned relative to the road and 2 detached dwellings which are sited slightly deeper into their plots and at an angle to the road. The dwellings on the southern side of the street have a single storey appearance from the street, with the bulk of the development following the contour of the hill to provide 3 storey elevations at the rear.

Plots vary in size and shape and the topography of the land falls dramatically from the north to the south resulting in an interesting and varied street scene. The host dwelling is detached and lies further into its site than the semi-detached dwellings to the west. The host dwelling and the western neighbouring dwelling at No. 54 have a large separation and more generous side space than is characteristic in the street scene.

The street scene in the upper section of the road has a less intensely developed character than that of the lower section, with an attractive woodland setting of mature trees and substantial terraced gardens with mature landscaping which as a consequence of the falling ground levels down from the north to the south means houses on the southern side of the upper section of the street occupy elevated and prominent positions relative to those houses positioned in the lower section of the

street. The shape of the individual house plots tends to be irregular, following the contours of the elevated bank on which the houses are positioned. In particular, the three pairs of semi-detached dwellings at Nos. 44 - 54 lie parallel with the street, while their respective rear gardens follow the slope resulting in the rear gardens of each dwelling being offset relative to the host dwellings.

The abundance and maturity of the trees and landscaping contribute to a semi-rural feel and the contribution that the woodland makes to the character of the area has been recognised in the making of a TPO No. 443 which covers the application site and extends down the slope to include the lower sections of the rear gardens of Nos. 44 - 54. The TPO was confirmed in March 1989 and protects "any tree of whatever species."

Consultations

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- o Overdevelopment
- o Inappropriate development of garden land
- o The road is narrow and already congested with no distinction between the public verge and the main highway
- o Trees would be felled and vegetation/foliage lost
- o Lack of detail on the submitted plans
- o The design would not preserve the green and spacious neighbourhood
- o In winter the dwelling would be clearly visible from the lower part of Harvest Bank Road
- o The modern design is out of character and would stick out like a sore thumb
- o Noise carried downhill from the existing dwelling and the provision of large outdoor terraces will have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents
- o Would set a precedent
- o The house does not align with the other properties and would be a tall structure halfway down the plot
- o Loss of privacy, particularly when leaf cover is limited
- o Lack of contextual street elevation and site sections with indication of cut and fill
- o Loss of light to neighbouring property
- o Loss of outlook and visual impact of massing in relation to siting
- o Lack of parking
- o No details of refuse storage
- o Sewerage inadequacy
- o Risk of subsidence as a result of tree felling and soil removal
- o Loss of open character and views
- o The siting would introduce three storey development deeper into the site
- o Potential impact on flooding
- o Impact on semi-rural setting
- o Impact of schools and other social infrastructure

The Wickham Common Residents' Association raises objections on the following grounds:

- o The infilling would not protect or maintain the original character of the area
- o Lack of parking off-street - the area shown as parking is actually the public verge
- o Would result in the garden of No. 56a being small, and the overdevelopment of No. 56

Environmental Health

No objections are raised regarding the pollution/environmental health impacts of the proposal.

With regards to the suitability of the residential proposals, concerns are raised:

- o The only communal living space is combined with the kitchen area which is not desirable due to the risk of accidents associated with areas used for both food preparation and recreation.
- o The proposed window and external door design to the proposed development does not appear to include any windows with small opening casements or similar, which would present a conflict between providing natural ventilation to the room, retaining warmth in the winter and adequate security.

Highways

Harvest Bank Road is an unmade road; the applicant is proposing to provide two/three off street parking spaces for the proposed development, which is acceptable. However the donor property requires two off street parking spaces too. The parking spaces indicated on the submitted plans are on street parking. This needs to be clarified.

Also no gates are permitted to open out onto the public highway

Trees

Any comments will be reported verbally.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan

BE1 Design of New Development
H7 Housing Density and Design
H9 Side space
T3 Parking
T13 Unmade roads/unadopted highways
NE7 Development and Trees

Supplementary Planning Guidance is also material to the determination of the application:

SPG1 - General Design Principles
SPG2 - Residential Design Guidance

The following policies of the London Plan are of particular relevance:

Policy 3.3 Increasing housing supply
Policy 3.4 Optimising Housing potential
Policy 3.5 Quality and design of housing developments
Policy 5.12 Flood risk management
Policy 5.13 Sustainable drainage
Policy 6.13 Parking
Policy 7.4 Local Character

Planning History

There is no recent or relevant planning history to report.

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties.

While the concerns raised regarding the internal layout and fenestration of the dwelling are noted, it is not considered that these layout inadequacies would constitute a reasonable planning ground for refusal and that the residential amenity of the prospective occupants of the proposed dwelling would be acceptable.

With regards to the highways comments regarding the submitted drawings showing off-street parking which appears to be on the highway, to serve the host or 'donor' dwelling, it is necessary to carefully consider whether this layout would be acceptable. The applicant has not submitted evidence that there is any way that the parking spaces shown to be provided on the highway would be capable of being preserved solely for the use of the donor property, and the site plan indicates that this area is outside of the redline/blueline plans. On that basis, Members may consider that insufficient information has been submitted to ensure that the development would provide adequate designated parking to serve the needs of the existing and host dwellings, taking into account the low PTAL level for the application site.

The proposed dwelling would be sited on a severance site, formed from a significant proportion of the side garden of the host dwelling. Policy H7 of the Unitary Development Plan requires that new housing development is designed to recognise and complement the qualities of surrounding areas. SPG2 emphasises the important role that gardens play in providing a setting in front of and around a

building. This approach is consistent with the NPPF and London Plan policies and guidance.

With regards to the impact of the proposal on the visual amenities and character of the area, it is considered that the proposal would fail to complement or have sufficient regard for the distinctive residential character of the upper section of Harvest Bank Road. The proposed infill site is considered to be highly valued and to contribute to the character and context of the street scene and surrounding area. The street scene is characterised by its semi-rural appearance which exists in part because of the strong landscaped quality of the upper section of the street, by the stepping back of a number of dwellings from the highway and by the gaps between dwellings. It is considered that the space between No. 56 resulting from its setting deeper into its site and the wide side gardens at Nos. 54 and 56 makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area, reinforced and supported by the woodland TPO.

The development of this severance site would result in the loss of openness, undermining the spatial characteristics and quality of the street scene. The dwelling would be readily appreciable from the highway and the loss of openness and views between dwellings would cause perceptible harm to the visual amenities of the area.

The level of spatial separation to the boundary of the site with No. 54 would be less than the minimum 1m side space required under Policy H9 of the Unitary Development Plan. While a more generous gap would be retained between built development on either side of the boundary as a consequence of the large side garden at No. 54, the lack of side space being capable of being provided is considered to indicate the cramped nature of the development in relation to the formed site boundaries. 1.2m is retained to the eastern boundary of the site with No. 56 and the relatively low level of side spatial separation is out of character with the general level of spaciousness between individual dwellings or pairs of semi-detached dwellings.

With regards to the impact of the proposal on residential amenity, the principal concern relates to the relationship between the proposed dwelling and associated terraces and the immediately neighbouring dwellings at Nos. 54 and 56. The proposed dwelling would be set deep within its site and in quite close proximity to the boundary of the site with No. 54. The flank elevation of the dwelling would present development over three storeys to the neighbouring dwelling, incorporating large terraces, and as such would appear visually intrusive and overdominant when viewed from the neighbouring dwelling.

No. 54 has a terraced rear garden which addresses the topography of the site, and which includes a terraced area close to the cherry tree which is shown to be removed. This rear terrace area would be visually dominated by the proposed development and the terrace to the rear of the proposed dwelling would be sited in close proximity to the existing reasonably private amenity space to No. 54. The proposal would result in a perceived and actual loss of privacy to the neighbouring occupants, since the introduction of rear facing windows and terraces with unobstructed views to the western boundary of the site would give rise to the

impression of a large proportion of the neighbouring garden being visible from the proposed development.

With regards to the impact of the proposal on the residential amenities of the occupiers of the host dwelling at No. 56, the design of the dwelling has been oriented to minimise the impact on that property, and the rear terraces incorporate louvre privacy screens to restrict the potential for overlooking to the eastern boundary of the site.

While it is noted that the screening afforded by the large deciduous trees to the rear of the application site will be diminished during the autumn and winter months, the back to back separation between the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling and the rear of the properties in the lower level of Harvest Bank Road is considered sufficient to limit the impact on privacy to these properties to a satisfactory degree. Similarly, the separation would also tend to restrict the noise impacts of the proposal on these properties.

The application site was visited by the case officer and the aims and objectives of the above policies, national and regional planning guidance, all other material planning considerations including any objections, other representations and relevant planning history on the site were taken into account in the assessment of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION: APPLICATION BE REFUSED

The reasons for refusal are:

- 1 The proposed dwelling, by reason of its size and siting, would result in a cramped overdevelopment of the side garden site which would be out of character with neighbouring development, detrimental to the distinctive character and quality of the street scene and the area in general and contrary to Policies H7, H9 and BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.**
- 2 The proposal, by reason of its siting, height and design incorporating large terraced areas, would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring properties, leading to an unacceptable loss of prospect and privacy, thereby contrary to Policies BE1 and H7 of the Unitary Development Plan.**
- 3 Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that adequate off-street parking facilities can be provided within the curtilage of the site to serve the occupants of the existing and the proposed dwellings, in the absence of which the proposal would give rise to an undesirable increase in on-street parking thereby contrary to Policy T3 of the Unitary Development Plan.**