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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2015

**by Michael Boniface MSc MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 18 June 2015**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/15/3004638**  
**1 & 2 The Approach, London, NW4 2HT**

- 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 Create REIT Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
  - The application Ref H/03122/14, dated 6 June 2014, was refused by notice dated 6 November 2014.
  - The development proposed is demolition of the existing building and erection of a building to provide 6no self contained flats. Associated parking and works.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the description of development contained in the appeal forms and the Council's decision rather than the planning application forms as this more accurately describes the proposal.

## Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

## Reasons

4. The site comprises a pair of semi-detached dwellings which are two storeys in height although No 1 includes accommodation within the roof. The buildings stand on a prominent corner location at the junction between Brent Road, The Approach and West Avenue. Brent Road is a busy arterial route accommodating a range of residential and commercial uses and buildings of varied size and scale. A Large block of flats stands adjacent to the site on Brent Road known as Alexander Court. West Avenue is distinctly residential in character and far more consistent in the size, scale and design of properties which are predominantly two storeys and semi-detached. The Approach is a small section of road linking Brent Road and West Avenue. Whilst the buildings front The Approach, they are seen in the context of the streets either side.
5. Although the orientation of the existing buildings is such that they are highly visible from Brent Road, I do not agree with the appellant that they are primarily seen in the context of this street. To my mind, their scale, design, materials and residential appearance are all far more akin to the residential

streetscene in West Avenue. As such, The Approach appears as a continuation of this residential street despite the change in orientation that addresses the corner.

6. The proposed development, despite being lower in height than the existing dwellings, would be far greater in terms of scale and massing, incorporating a much wider frontage that would wrap around the site and infill the current gap with properties on West Avenue. Whilst this larger scale, mass and bulk reflects that of other buildings on Brent Road, it would be in stark contrast with the residential scale and character that I have described on The Approach and West Avenue. This would remove the visual signalling provided by the existing properties that suggest to highway users that they are entering a residential area, instead seeking to draw the larger buildings of Brent Road off of their existing linear path and into the residential side streets. The modern design of the building would further exacerbate the visual anomaly created by the development in an otherwise uniformly designed residential area. I conclude that the development would become a prominent, visually dominating and incongruous addition to the street.
7. As such, the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be in conflict with Policy CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) (2012) which requires high quality design that respects local context and distinctiveness; Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) (2012) which requires proposals to preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets; the detailed design advice contained in the Council's Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2013); and the design objectives contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
8. I note the planning permissions<sup>1</sup> granted by the Council nearby at 12 Goodyers Gardens but these involve a single dwelling rather than flats and would stand amongst other dwellings of much greater scale than those adjacent the appeal site. Furthermore, the site is less prominent than the appeal site, being located at the end of a cul-de-sac. As such, I do not consider these schemes are comparable to the appeal proposal before me.
9. I have had regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development advocated by the Framework but the development would not fulfil important environmental objectives and cannot be considered to represent sustainable development, taking the policies of the Framework together as a whole.
10. Although the development would deliver a range of benefits including the provision of additional dwellings and the re-use of a brownfield site, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified with regard to the main issue.
11. In light of the above, and having considered all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

*Michael Boniface*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> H/05091/10 and H/03853/11