

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 FEBRUARY 2020

Ward: Battle

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/19/3237799

Planning Ref: 190522

Site: 39 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

Proposal: Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings

Decision level: Committee decision on 10/09/2019

Method: Written representations

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

Date Determined: 23 January 2020

Inspector: James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The application site extends to some 0.14 hectares (25 metre frontage/width, 56 metre depth, equating to 1400 square metres in area) and comprises a substantial 2.5 storey plus partial basement Edwardian detached house on the west side of Brunswick Hill, a residential road running north from Tilehurst Road.

1.2 The site has been the subject of three previous applications refused for a development requiring the demolition of the dwelling at 39 Brunswick Hill (05/00886/OUT, 891317/891318, and 190522/FUL).

1.3 In September 2019, Planning Applications Committee refused planning application 190522/FUL for the following reasons (summarised):

- Loss of dwelling (a non-designated heritage asset)
- Impact on character of the area (introduction of flats)
- The application fails to secure a s106 agreement for the provision of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) or to adequately provide for the require Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)
- Failure to provide a s106 agreement for the provision of a deferred affordable housing contribution

2. SUMMARY OF DECISION

2.1 The Inspector considered that the main issues in the appeal were:

- the effect of the existing building and the redevelopment of on the character and appearance of the area including the loss of a non-designated heritage asset

2.2 The Inspector noted the previous appeal decision and the Inspector's report which noted the dwelling as being a non-designated heritage asset as defined within the NPPF.

2.3 The Inspector also noted that the large Edwardian villa has previously been assessed as not suitable for inclusion on the local list, and that the significance of the heritage asset is 'modest'. Notwithstanding this, the Inspector has determined that the loss of the heritage asset would conflict with Policies EN1 and CC7 of the Local Plan.

2.4 The Inspector has also noted that the design proposed has attempted to address the concerns of the previous appeal. However, the Inspector concluded that, "*the design*

would not be of a suitably high quality design as to respond positively to the local context or reinforce local character and distinctiveness.”

2.5 The Inspector outlined a number of concerns regarding the proposal. Specifically, the design was considered to be harmful to the character of the area due to:

- the considerable width and depth of the proposal;
- the bland nature of flank elevations;
- conspicuous roof-scape, large spans, and lack of variety;
- incongruous appearance within the street; and
- an insufficient level of design quality to mitigate loss of dwelling

2.6 The Inspector concluded, on affordable housing, that an agreement between the Council and the applicant was apparent, but that the completion of a s106 would not lead to an altered decision by him.

Comment:

A pleasing decision which validates the Local Planning Authority’s design concerns for this development.

Although not meeting the requirements for local listing status, the National Planning Policy Framework allows for the consideration of a building as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in a planning decision, because of its heritage interest.

On affordable housing, your officers are content with the conclusions reached by the Inspector and are confident that this does not prejudice officers’ ability to secure affordable housing.

