



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2019

**by Andrew Walker MSc BSc(Hons) BA(Hons) BA PgDip MCIEH CEnvH**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 29 April 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/W/18/3217482**

**38 High Beech Road, Loughton IG10 4BL**

- 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 Stanoak against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
  - The application Ref EPF/0471/18, dated 14 February 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 May 2018.
  - The development proposed is to replace 1 existing dwelling (detached) with 2 new dwellings (semi-detached).
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Procedural Matters

2. An emerging plan, the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017, was submitted to the Secretary of State on 21 September 2018 for examination. It is not part of the adopted development plan. As it is not clear the extent to which any objections to its policies are unresolved or the extent to which its policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I give it limited weight.
3. Since the appeal was made, the Council has approved a further application in respect of the appeal site (the approved proposal)<sup>1</sup> for the alteration of the existing building into two 4 bedroom houses.

## Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

## Reasons

5. High Beech Road is occupied by buildings of mixed type and design. It is mostly residential in nature though commercial buildings exist at the southern part nearest Loughton High Street. The road rises on an incline towards the north and as it does so, in the vicinity of the appeal site, its character becomes increasing sub-urban and marked by dwellings which are pre-dominantly 2-storey houses. The local topography also entails that houses on the west side of the road, in the locus of the appeal property, have been built upon a higher ground level than the highway. Conversely, houses opposite have been erected on a lower ground level than the road.

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<sup>1</sup> EPF/2016/18, Permission granted 11 January 2019

6. The current property on the appeal site has a building form which is in sympathy with the incline of the road. The building's ground floor levels rise from the garage southern side-extension up to the dwelling's front door at the north end of the frontage. No 40 adjacent also has a frontage incorporating a front door and porch to the north which is stepped above a lower building level containing a garage to the south. Overall these features produce a pleasing aesthetic, with the buildings complementing each other and the rise of the road. This aesthetic is further re-inforced by virtue of the height of the appeal building's roof ridges and slopes broadly increasing from south to north.
7. The appeal proposal would produce two dwellings which together would present a rectangular appearance when seen from the front, with largely consistent ground levels and roof ridge heights across the span of the building. This would end the current sympathetic stepped-up effect of the current design, while I note that the approved proposal would preserve this aspect.
8. The increased and consistent ridge height, and the decreased and consistent ground floor level, would combine with an increased building footprint to produce a significantly bulkier and dominant structure as compared to existing. This would be particularly marked given the lower ground levels of houses across the road, and would create a sense of imbalance between the properties which would harm the character of this part of High Beech Road.
9. The proposed dormer windows are not dissimilar from others locally. However, in combination with the increased height, mass and bulk of the proposed development they would contribute to an appearance of overdevelopment when viewed from angles to the rear and sides of the building.
10. I acknowledge that the new building would have a roof line and building footprint which would not be inconsistent with nearby properties but in my judgement it is the combination of the proposal's features, as addressed in the preceding paragraphs, which together make it unacceptable.
11. For all of the above reasons, the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such it is contrary to Policy DBE1 of the Epping Forest District Adopted Local Plan and Policies CP2(iv) and CP7 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Alterations which together seek to ensure proposed new buildings respect their setting. It is also contrary to the design principles of the Framework.

### **Other Matters**

12. The proposal would create two modern homes which would make efficient use of previously-developed land and help boost housing supply. However, these benefits of moderate weight do not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. The appellants have submitted a Unilateral Undertaking (UU). The UU would provide a financial contribution towards the mitigation of adverse effects to the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) caused by the creation of a new home within the surrounding area. As the appeal is being dismissed for reasons relating to character and appearance, it is not necessary to consider the UU any further.

**Conclusion**

14. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given the appeal is dismissed.

*Andrew Walker*

INSPECTOR