

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Ref No. 4/0772/95

G Maclean  
36 Belmont Road  
Hemel Hempstead  
Herts

Richard I. Onslow  
The Old School  
High Road  
Soulbury  
Beds

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION

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10 Hillfield Road, Hemel Hempstead

DEMOLITION OF BUNGALOW & CONSTRUCTION OF 9 FLATS & PARKING

Your application for *full planning permission* dated 12.06.1995 and received on 13.06.1995 has been **REFUSED**, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet.

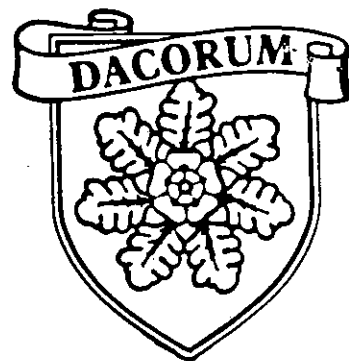
Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 03.08.1995

(ENC Reasons and Notes)

REASONS FOR REFUSAL  
OF APPLICATION: 4/0772/95

Date of Decision: 03.08.1995



Policies of the Development Plan aim to safeguard the appearance and character of the Boroughs residential areas of Hemel Hempstead and maintain highway safety. The proposal is excessive for the site, it would result in an unacceptable form of development, served by a poor access, with inadequate parking, and would be detrimental to the visual and residential amenity of the locality.



# The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office

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Bedfordshire  
LU7 0BX

Your reference

RIO/SM/461

Our reference

T/APP/A1910/A/95/258054/P8

Date 08 FEB 1996

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78  
APPEAL BY MR GORDON MACLEAN  
APPLICATION NO:- 4/0072/95 4/0772/95

Received - 9 FEB 1996

Comments

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeal. This appeal is against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of 9 flats and car parking at 10 Hillfield Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. I have considered the representations made by you and by the Council, and those made by the interested persons. I have also seen those representations made direct to the Council prior to the determination of the application, copies of which have been sent to me. I inspected the site on Tuesday 23rd January 1996.

2. The appeal site is located close to, and on the eastern side of, Hemel Hempstead town centre. It is almost adjacent to the town's General Hospital which is just to the west. The site is on the corner of the junction between Hillfield Road and Walnut Grove, the latter being quite a modern development of principally terraced houses to the south. Hillfield Road itself is comprised of mainly large and well spaced detached houses and bungalows.

3. Outline planning permission was previously granted for the redevelopment of the site with 9 elderly-persons flats under reference 4/2330/89. However this permission has now lapsed and although there are similarities between that scheme and the appeal proposal, the proposed building is larger and contains a greater number of 2-bedroom flats than the approved scheme. Whilst the existence of this previous permission is a relevant consideration I do not therefore find it to be of overriding significance.

4. In view of the fact that the previous permission has lapsed, I do not consider either that I am bound to accept the principle of redevelopment in reaching my decision on this appeal. In any event, because of the requirements of Section 54A of the Act, I am required to give the provisions of the development plan priority. In this respect I note that the Dacorum Borough Local Plan is up-to-date, having been adopted on 12th April 1995, and the relevant policies and their objectives should be the prime consideration.



RECYCLED PAPER

5. For the purposes of this appeal the principal development plan policies which seem to me to be relevant are Structure Plan policy 47 and Local Plan policies 7 and 8. These in general terms seek to ensure high standards in new development and the rejection of proposals which can be regarded as incompatible with their surroundings. Policy 101 emphasises the importance of these objectives in relation to new housing development specifically. I also consider policy 54 in the Local Plan to be important. This seeks to ensure that adequate off-street parking is provided in connection with new development.

6. Having considered these policies, the representations, and what I observed at the visit, I conclude that there are two principal issues in this appeal. These are:

i) whether the proposed building would by reason of its size and appearance be seen as an incongruous and cramped overdevelopment of the site causing harm to the character of the area and the appearance of the street scene;

ii) whether the proposed parking provision is adequate to meet the needs of the proposed development.

7. I could detect no other sites in Hillfield Road east of the hospital which have been redeveloped, apart from 2 new detached houses opposite the appeal site. The character of the street is created by the older-style buildings which are generally large and quite spaciouly laid out. These appear to be principally single dwellings. There are no flats that I could see. The site is not in a Conservation Area where there may be an argument against redevelopment in principle, but nevertheless the policy objectives are clearly intended to safeguard urban character. In my judgement the building which you propose is so wholly different in terms of size, appearance and site coverage compared with what exists at present that it would be seen as being out of character. It would also be seen to be an overdevelopment of the site in its context.

8. In this respect I draw attention, for example, to the multiplicity of windows on the front elevation facing Hillfield Road and the 3 storey height adjacent to No 8. Also to the length of the rear wing facing Walnut Grove. In my judgement the acceptance of redevelopment, particularly in this intense form, could herald an unwelcome and harmful change in the character and appearance of Hillfield Road. It would certainly appear incongruous with its surroundings and an overdevelopment of the site when compared with the rest of the street. The proposal would not accord with the objectives of the policies I have cited in paragraph 5 above in my judgement.

9. I am also much concerned about the adequacy of the car parking provision proposed to meet the requirements of the occupants of 9 flats, 8 of which would have 2-bedrooms. You propose 9 spaces in what appears to me to be a somewhat awkward, but possibly workable, arrangement. The Council's parking standards for a development of this size require a minimum of 18 spaces, whilst the Local Plan standards would require 26 spaces. By either standard your proposal incorporates a substantial shortfall.

10. The site is close to the town centre in an area where there is obviously substantial demand for on-street parking spaces, a problem no doubt exacerbated by the presence of the adjacent hospital. Close to the appeal site, on-street parking is mainly prevented by double yellow lines. There is some on-street parking permitted in Hillfield Road and Walnut Grove but at the time of my visit

all the available places were occupied by parked vehicles. It was not possible to find a parking space for a considerable distance along Hillfield Road to the east.

11. In my judgement 9 spaces is insufficient to cater for the needs of this development, most of the flats being 2-bedroom, for the occupants, visitors and service vehicles. The inadequacy of the on-site provision would in my judgement result in drivers seeking to park on-street thus adding unacceptably to the local parking difficulties. Given the intensity of the proposed development and the site coverage I do not see that it would be feasible to increase the parking provision on the basis of the submitted layout. I therefore conclude that the proposal is contrary to the objectives of Local Plan policy 54.

12. I accept that a well designed scheme has been produced and that no significant vegetation would need to be removed to implement it. However it is clear to me that you have chosen the wrong site in the wrong location. I understand too, that you have based it on the previously permitted elderly persons' scheme. Nevertheless, I have concluded that the differences between the two schemes are material and justify a different decision, particularly because of the increased importance now accorded to the development plan policy objectives. I note your suggestion that the occupancy of the flats could be limited to hospital staff, or elderly persons. However, this would not overcome my objections and it could not, in my view, be done by means of the imposition of planning conditions. Nor is there any unilateral undertaking under the provisions of S106 of the Act before me for my consideration in any event.

13. I have in reaching my decision on this appeal taken into account all the matters raised in the representations. However nothing is, I consider, of such importance as to outweigh the conclusion that the appeal should be dismissed.

14. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me I hereby dismiss this appeal.

Yours faithfully



F A Robinson BSc MPhil DipTS FRTPI MCIT  
Inspector