



The Planning Inspectorate

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

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Your Ref:

Our Ref:

T/APP/B1415/A/93/218860/P2

Date:

11 MAY 93

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPEAL BY J HOLLINGSWORTH LTD
APPLICATION NO: HS/OA/92/0443

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 Hastings Borough Council to refuse outline planning permission for the erection of a 3 storey development of 60 flats in 3 separate blocks on land at Braybrooke Road; Hastings. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council and also those made by interested persons, including those made directly to the Council which have been forwarded to me. I inspected the site on 2 April 1993.
2. The site is a long, triangular, steeply sloping strip of land bounded by Braybrooke Road on its north western side and the railway line at a much lower level on its south eastern side. It is currently occupied by a garage. A 3 storey Victorian terrace lies to the south west and there are mainly 20th Century 2 storey houses and bungalows on the opposite side of the road. An illustration submitted with the outline application suggests three pairs of squarish blocks with pyramidal roofs set at progressively lower levels down the steep slope of Braybrooke Road. Rear parking would be provided underneath terraced gardens and partly below the blocks themselves. There would also be open parking at the north eastern end. I have treated this drawing as indicative of the sort of built form and parking arrangement that might be adopted although I appreciate that all matters are reserved.
3. From my inspection of the site and its surroundings and from consideration of all the representations made, I consider the main issue in this case to be the impact of the development on the street scene and on the appearance of the wider area.

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4. The adopted Hastings Borough Plan contains policies which indicate that new structures will generally be designed to complement surrounding development, although development which provides a visually complementary contrast may sometimes be acceptable. The Second Alteration, shortly to be adopted, contains similar policies.

5. At the south western end of the site, on the top of the hill, a 3 storey block would be similar in height to the adjacent 3 storey terrace. However, Braybrooke Road falls steeply away to the north east; seen from lower down the hill, I consider that a 3 storey development overall, however designed, would appear much too massive because of the combination of its height and the slope of the land. It would completely dominate this lower part of the road and appear entirely out of scale in comparison with the houses at the end of Lower Park Road and those on the opposite side of Braybrooke Road. If designed as illustrated, I consider that the large square forms and substantial plinths of the blocks would reinforce the bulk. The existing garage buildings, though not quality structures, are considerably less bulky. Moreover, I believe that if it were intended to provide parking at the lower end of the site as suggested by the drawing, this could only be provided by substantial excavation and the erection of retaining walls; the large mass of the lowest block would then rise above the car park, giving an overwhelmingly hard appearance.

6. Garden space would be very limited. As Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 points out, this is normally a matter for potential purchasers to judge, but here the ratio of building and hard surfaces to garden would compare so unfavourably with nearby properties - including the terrace to the south west - that the impression of excessive bulk would be reinforced.

7. As for views, I cannot give much weight to the protection of private views because the planning system is intended to operate in the public interest. However, the rear of the site is exposed to public view from the high ground around Hastings Castle and the West Hill recreation ground. I consider that should the scheme be designed in the manner illustrated, the large blockish forms and the rear underparking would clearly be seen and would appear out of character in this attractive hilly townscape of traditional terraced houses.

8. I conclude that a 3 storey scheme of 60 flats, however designed, would have an adverse effect on the street scene and on the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the objectives of the Hastings Borough Plan in respect of new development, and I consider that this appeal should be dismissed. Although this scheme is smaller in scale than the 5 storey scheme dismissed on appeal in 1989 (Ref No T/APP/B1415/A/89/132474/P7) I do not believe that a development of the number of units and scale now proposed, with the required amount of parking, could be devised for this site to overcome these objections.

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9. I have considered all the other matters raised in the written representations, including the Council's comments about security in the parking areas, but do not find them to be of such weight as to alter the balance of my conclusions.

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

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

Jonathan Bore

JONATHAN BORE BA(Hons) DipUD MRTPI
Inspector