

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2016

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/W/16/3157287
215 Plashet Road, Plaistow, London E13 0QU

- 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 Mr Navnihal Singh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref 15/02944/COU, dated 22 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is the retention and alterations of three flats on the first floor of 215-217 Plashet Road.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my site visit there were three flats at first floor level; 215A, 215B and 217A. The application form states that 215A and 217A have been flats for 30 years and this is not disputed by the Council. However it is also not disputed by the parties that the current provision of flat 215B does not benefit from planning permission.
3. The appeal site as shown on the drawings includes Nos 215 and 217 Plashet Road which is the ground floor commercial unit and the flats above, and this is reflected in the description of the development given on the application form. However the address given on the application form is just No 215, and from the drawings it is clear that the flat at No 217A is not affected by the development. As such I have used the address given on the forms.
4. At the site visit I was unable to gain access into flat 217A but, in light of the fact that this flat is not affected by the development, this does not prejudice my determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character of the area.

Reasons

6. The development relates to the first floor above a ground floor retail unit selling beds. The properties to either side of the site, at Nos 213 and 219, are in residential use, but No 229 is a pharmacy and there is a short parade of shops
-

south west of the site and a medical centre directly opposite the site. This mix of residential and commercial uses strongly characterises the area.

7. The proposal would provide two sizeable studio flats. These would not be suited for family use. The three bedroom flat, identified as the pre-existing layout on the drawings, would be more suitable as family accommodation. Indeed the current arrangement of two, two bedroomed flats would also be more suited to family accommodation than the proposal. As such the development would result in the loss of family housing.
8. Family accommodation contributes positively to the mixed character of the area and therefore its loss would adversely affect this character. Furthermore, although the nearby streets off Plashet Road are more residential in nature, the residential use of the neighbouring properties and the commercial use of the ground floor as a bed shop does not suggest this site's immediate surroundings make it unsuitable for family accommodation.
9. Although the property does not have any outdoor amenity space, this would not be unusual for units in urban settings such as this, even if large enough to be used by a family. As such, this does not indicate the property is unsuitable for family living.
10. I accept that a net increase in one unit would contribute to the Borough's housing supply overall. However as set out in the explanatory text to Policy H4 of the Newham Core Strategy (NCS), there is sufficient capacity of flats but over the plan period there is likely to be a shortage of family housing. As such I consider more weight should be given to the retention of family housing than to an increase in the provision of smaller units of accommodation.
11. As such the loss of family accommodation would harm the character of the area. Consequently the development would conflict with policies S1, H1, SP1, SP2 and SP3 of the NCS which all support the provision of mixed, high quality, successful communities, and policies H4 and S6 of the NCS which seek to protect the existing family housing in Newham. It would also fail to accord with policy 3.8 of the London Plan and chapter 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework which aim to achieve a mix of housing.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR