

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2016

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 9th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G2625/W/16/3153982

72 Marlborough Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 4PH

- 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 Nick Gooch against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00095/F, dated 18 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is change of use of existing outhouse with first floor extension to new dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - (a) The character and appearance of the area;
 - (b) The living conditions of future occupiers of the development;
 - (c) The living conditions of occupiers of 72 Marlborough Road; and
 - (d) The provision of cycle parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. 72 Marlborough Road is located on a corner plot between Marlborough Road and Spencer Street and is an end of terrace property converted into two flats. The streets surrounding No 72 are characterised by rows of brick terrace housing with consistent building heights and widths. Plots are typically long and narrow, but properties are wide enough to accommodate a front door and ground floor window facing the street.
 4. The appeal site consists of a single storey outhouse and part of the yard to the rear of No 72. The outhouse is very narrow and short compared to the surrounding properties with a small footprint. Due to its limited size and its consistent building line with the flank elevation of No 72, the building has an unobtrusive effect on the character and appearance of the area.
 5. The proposed development would enlarge the outhouse considerably. However, the narrowness of the building compared to the surrounding properties would remain very obvious and would be accentuated by the increase in height, the use of timber boarding on the first floor and its
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projection towards the road beyond the building line with No 72. Despite the increased height, it would remain shorter than the surrounding properties. As a consequence of these alterations, the development would look incongruous as a small and very narrow detached property in an area characterised by the uniformity of terraced housing.

6. Concluding on this main issue, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not accord with Policy DM3 of the Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014 (NDM) which, amongst other things, requires proposals to respect local distinctiveness and character in terms of height, scale, massing, form and materials.

Living conditions of future occupiers

7. The proposed development would provide living accommodation across two floors with a separate bedroom and shower room. However, the narrowness of the building and its small footprint, even with the extensions, would result in a small living space. At around 30 square metres, the internal floor space falls some way short of the Council's indicative guidelines for minimum internal space standards in the supporting text to NDM Policy DM2, as well as the government's more recently published nationally described space standards¹. As a consequence, the proposed development would have a cramped internal layout even for a single occupant.
8. External space for the proposed development would consist of bin storage adjacent to Marlborough Road and part of the yard between the new dwelling and the boundary with 42 Spencer Street. From the plans before me, it does not appear that this part of the yard would be separated from the remaining yard for the flats at 72 Marlborough Road, and would be adjacent to and enclosed by a proposed car parking space. It would also be a very small space without much functional value. As such, the external space for the proposed development would be unsatisfactory.
9. Openings on the proposed development would be limited to the front elevation facing the rear of 72 Marlborough Road. No 72 has a two storey rear projection that would be only around 3 metres away from the front elevation of the proposed development. There are no windows in the rear projection facing the proposed development, but the blank wall would dominate views from the openings on the front elevation. As such, this would create a poor outlook for future occupiers.
10. Concluding on this main issue, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of future occupiers in terms of inadequate internal and external space and a poor outlook. Therefore, it would not accord with NDM Policy DM2 which, amongst other things, requires development to provide adequate internal space and levels of outlook for future occupiers along with appropriate external space.

Living conditions of occupiers of 72 Marlborough Road

11. The existing yard to the rear of 72 Marlborough Road is predominantly hard surfaced and visible from the road. Based on my site visit, it does not appear

¹ *Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard*, Department of Communities and Local Government – March 2015

to be frequently used as private external space by occupiers of the two flats at No 72. The original planning permission for the ground floor flat conversion in 2007 (ref 07/00992/F), according to the plans supplied by the Council, provided two car parking spaces, one adjacent to Marlborough Road and the other between the outhouse and the two storey rear projection. Space for clothes drying and other purposes was provided along the boundary with 42 Spencer Street.

12. The proposed development would necessitate the repositioning of the car parking space between the outhouse and rear projection to the boundary with 42 Spencer Street. This would reduce the amount of external space for the occupiers of No 72. The external space for the proposed development between the outhouse and the boundary with No 42 would reduce this external space further. Overall, it would represent a significant reduction notwithstanding the apparent limited use of this space at present.
13. Concluding on this main issue, the proposed development would cause harm to the occupiers of 72 Marlborough Road through the reduction in private external space. Therefore, it would not accord with NDM Policy DM2 which, amongst other things, requires the provision of appropriate external space.

Cycle parking

14. The planning permission for the ground floor flat conversion involves the outhouse being used as bicycle storage. At my site visit, it was not possible to tell whether the building was being used for such purposes, although the door was secured with a padlock. The proposed development would remove this bike storage, which currently benefits the occupiers of 72 Marlborough Road, and would not seek to provide replacement space. In an urban area where cycling is advantageous, the lack of parking space would reduce the likelihood of occupiers of the proposed development and the existing flats at No 72 from keeping and using a bicycle.
15. Concluding on this main issue, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the provision of cycle parking. Therefore, it would not accord with NDM Policy DM31 which seeks the provision of cycle parking to facilitate a modal shift towards cycling.

Conclusion

16. The proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of future occupiers of the development and existing occupiers of 72 Marlborough Road, and the provision of cycle parking. For these reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR