
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2016

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/16/3150754

3 Coppergate Close, Bromley, London Borough of Bromley BR1 3JG

- 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 & Mrs Attia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/15/05301/FULL1, dated 30 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as "retrospective planning application for conversion of detached garage into self contained studio flat".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue raised in respect of the appeal is whether the proposed development would provide satisfactory accommodation for its occupants.

Reasons

3. The proposal is a 1 bed studio dwelling. Policy 3.5 of the London Plan sets out minimum space standards to ensure that the development is not cramped internally, and ensure adequate room sizes and convenient and efficient room layouts. In the case of a one bed flat, the standards seek a minimum gross internal area of 37 m². The proposed dwelling, at about 25 m², would fall significantly short of the standard.
 4. I observed at my visit that the unit contained a combined open plan living space comprising a kitchenette and lounge area with a sleeping space separated by sliding screens and a separate shower room. Although storage could be accommodated in the loft space accessible by hatch and steps, there is limited space within the unit to create a dining area or provide laundry facilities without compromising on internal circulation space. Furthermore, I could see that little space was available around the double bed in the sleeping area, therefore movement is already restricted in this space.
 5. The flat is of insufficient size to provide a good standard of self contained accommodation that would meet the functional needs of an occupier. Although the external appearance and design of the unit may be considered acceptable, the shortfall in internal space is significant when considered against the standards. The accommodation would be very cramped for a single occupier
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and would be extremely cramped if occupied by a couple. Whilst no objection has been raised to the proposal by the Council's Environmental Health Section and the appellant may consider the acceptability of the standard of living accommodation to be a matter of future occupiers to decide, this does not justify or make it acceptable to design and create poor living environments.

6. The appellant contends that as the accommodation would cater for non-family households the provision of private amenity space is not of the utmost importance. The proposal would not provide any outdoor living space. The appellant comments that there is access to public open space locally. I have no reason to doubt that this is the case. However, this matter in its own right does not outweigh or alter my conclusions in respect of the accommodation standards as discussed above.
7. Paragraph 3.36 of the London Plan states that single person dwellings of less than 37m² may be permitted if the development proposal is demonstrated to be of exemplary design and contributes to achievement of other objectives and policies of this Plan. However, I have found that the proposed development would not be an exemplary scheme and therefore would not contribute to meeting the objectives of the Plan.
8. For these reasons I conclude that the proposed development would not provide satisfactory accommodation for its occupants. The proposed development would be contrary to Policy 3.5 of the London Plan and the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance which seek, amongst other matters, new housing development to be designed to the highest quality internally.

Other Matters

9. The proposal would provide an additional home within the urban area that could contribute to the local rental market. Whilst the proposal would contribute one dwelling to the Borough's overall housing supply and optimise the housing potential at the appeal site, these benefits would not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusions

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR