
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 March 2017

by Helen Cassini BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/W/16/3166347
38 Grasvenor Avenue, Barnet EN5 2DB

- 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 J Poullis against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref:16/6143/FUL, dated 21 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of the existing property into two flats comprising of 1x3 bed and 1x2 bed including rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the loss of a single family dwelling house.

Reasons

3. Grasvenor Avenue is a relatively quiet residential street, characterised by 2-storey semi-detached dwellings. Evidence from the Council states that Grasvenor Avenue has not been diluted through the sub-division of family housing into flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation. The appeal property has been extended at the rear of the ground floor and also within the roof to provide additional living space.
4. It is noted that the appeal scheme is an amendment to a previous scheme at the appeal site which was refused planning permission¹. The scheme has been subsequently amended, with the current proposal consisting of one 2-bed flat and one 3-bed flat, both of which have access to outdoor amenity space.
5. In this instance, criteria (h) and (i) of Policy DM01 of Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) Development Plan Document 2012 (the DPD) are particularly pertinent with regards to housing conversions. My attention has been drawn to the entrance of the Underhill Open Space; a small electricity sub-station both of which are located opposite the appeal property; and Grasvenor Avenue Infant School which is located a short distance away.

¹ Council reference 16/2712/FUL

6. However, with the exception of these facilities and infrastructure, for the purposes of criteria (h) and (i) of Policy DM01 of the DPD, there is no doubt that the surrounding area consists mainly of single family dwellings.
7. The proposal includes a modest extension of the ground floor of approximately 0.5 metres and also a first floor rear extension of approximately 2.9 metres in depth. There are no similar first floor extensions within the immediate locality. Nonetheless, given the relatively modest depth of the extensions, both would remain subservient to the host property and no harm would occur in respect of the character and appearance of property or the wider street scene. Furthermore, minimal changes are proposed to the side elevation of the host property, which would result in no harm in regard to character and appearance. In addition, due to the modest scale of the extensions, no harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring properties would occur.
8. The supporting text to Policy DM01 of the DPD confirms that 'conversions may be appropriate in certain types of property or street, particularly where they are highly accessible.' The appellant contends that the appeal property is located within an accessible location. However the public transport accessibility level (PTAL) for the location of the site is rated as 2, which is defined as 'poor'. Given that the appeal property is sited approximately a 20 minute walk from the nearest underground station, it is not considered to be in a highly accessible location.
9. It is recognised that that the proposal would boost the supply of housing within the Borough. In addition, due to the scale of the appeal property, the formation of the two flats would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants. Nonetheless, the proposal would result in the loss of a single family property in an area with limited accessibility. Furthermore, such a conversion would result in an increase in people movement and associated noise and activity when compared to a single family dwelling.
10. Consequently, the modest benefit of the additional housing provided by the conversion would be outweighed by the unacceptable loss of a single family dwelling house, which would also detract from the local character of the area. Therefore, the proposal would fail to accord with Policy DM01 of the DPD, Policies CS1 and CS5 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document 2012 and Barnet's Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance 2013 which when taken together seek, amongst other things, high quality development that preserves or enhances local character.

Conclusion

11. Despite finding no harm with regard to the proposed rear ground floor and first floor extensions, the harm I have found in relation to the loss of the single family dwelling house and to the local character of the area is decisive. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Helen Cassini

INSPECTOR