
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2017

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/17/3168441
126 Griffin Road, Plumstead SE18 7QD

- 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 Philip Feldman against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/2365/F, dated 20 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the change of use from single family dwelling to 2 no 1 bedroom flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the provision of small to medium family dwellings in the borough.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey mid-terraced dwelling in an area containing properties of a similar style and appearance. Griffin Road is heavily dominated by small and medium sized dwellings that seem to provide suitable homes for families. The overwhelming majority of properties in the local area also offer similar sized family accommodation.
4. Policy H(b) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (Core Strategy) explains that *to protect small and medium sized family dwellings and the local environment, the sub division of residential property will not be permitted where there are any of the following circumstances: the original premises is less than 111.48sqm of net floor area (1,200sqft) excluding any garages or less than 130sqm of net floor area (1,400sqft) where they form part of a terrace.*
5. Even though the property would, aided by a loft conversion¹ be completely modernised and its layout would allow rooms to be stacked, the existing basement has a head height that is much lower than rooms on the remaining floors. I also note the appellant does not question the Council's evidence that the headroom in the basement is less than 2.3 metres. Thus, in tune with the Council's *Residential Extensions Basements and Conversions Guidance*

¹ Council Application Ref: 16/0355/CP

Supplementary Planning Document (REBCSPD) the basement area should be excluded from the property's net floor area. Consequently, the property does not meet the threshold of 130m² set out in Core Strategy Policy H(b).

6. However I am mindful that there appear to be a handful of existing conversions in Griffin Road. The appellant suggests that the planning register indicates that this amounts to a total of nine, based on records from 1981. Notably, there are three directly opposite to the appeal site itself which have separate units in the basement. Each is accessed by way of a staircase leading off the front path from Griffin Road. Still, the majority of terraced properties in Griffin Road provide small and medium sized family accommodation.
7. The wider area also repeats my observations in Griffin Road, in that there are examples of conversions, with the basement and upper floors separated from each other, but the significant majority of properties are small and medium sized family dwellings. While the proposal would generate an additional home, the justification to Core Strategy Policy H(b) sets out that the aim of the policy is, especially in terms of terraced properties, to protect such accommodation as it has a vital and versatile role to play in meeting the borough's housing need.
8. I recognise the proposal would not have an impact on the environment or the character of the area. Also, despite the scheme's compliance with standards in Table 3.3 of The London Plan, the Housing Standards Policy Transition Statement Implementation: October 2015 and the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard relating to floorspace and its configuration. However, this does not change the scheme's conflict with Core Strategy Policy H(b) and the REBCSPD.
9. So, despite the site's accessible location, use of matching materials, cycle parking and the refuse and recycling storage, the proposal would result in the loss of a house suitable for a family. This would be harmful, especially if the conversion of small and medium family dwellings in the area was repeated. Cumulatively, the effect would substantially harm this part of the borough's housing need, for which there is a continuing and sustained demand. Thus, I do not consider the proposal, taken as a whole, displays any special circumstances. The proposal would not assist in providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations as set out in paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), even if it would widen the choice of homes in the area.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would significantly affect the provision of small to medium family dwellings in the borough. The proposal would not accord with Core Strategy Policy H(b), the REBCSPD and paragraph 7 of the Framework. These together seek, among other things, to provide the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations by protecting small and medium sized family dwellings where they offer a net floor area of less than 130m² in terraced properties.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR