



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2017

by Elizabeth Pleasant DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/17/3173264

106 Okehampton Crescent, Welling DA16 1DA

- 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 Ms Kaya Klasicka & Jerry Kizza against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 16/02725/FUL, dated 7 November 2016, was refused by a notice dated 3 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension, front porch, two storey rear extension and division into two flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council has advised that the proposed flats meet the prescribed internal space standards as set out in London Plan, 2016 which has adopted the nationally described space standards¹ (NDSS). Consequently, the Council has withdrawn their second reason for refusal which cited conflict with the Council's development plan which pre-dated the implementation of the NDSS and the London Plan.
3. The Council did not raise any objections to the proposed extensions, their concern relates solely to the division of the resultant dwelling into two flats. I too have therefore confined my considerations to the proposed conversion.

Main Issue

4. Accordingly, the main issue in this case is whether the property is suitable for conversion in principle in the light of local and national planning policies.

Reasons

5. 106 Okehampton Crescent is currently a three bedroom property with a floor area of approximately 91 square metres (sq.m). Policy H11 of the London Borough of Bexley's Unitary Development Plan, 2004 (UDP) seeks to protect the stock of small to medium sized dwellings within the Borough, and states that conversions of an existing dwelling should only take place in a dwelling of at least 110sq.m gross internal floor area as originally built.

¹ Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards. DCLG 2015.

6. The existing property makes a contribution to the Borough's housing stock of three bedroom medium sized dwellings. In view of the original size of this property its conversion to two flats would clearly conflict with the provisions of Policy H11 (1) of the UDP. I recognise that the proposed flats would provide two bedroomed units that would meet the NDSS for single storey dwellings, and may be suitable for small families. However, the existing accommodation also meets the minimum internal space standards for a three bedroom two-storey dwelling as set out in the London Plan, 2016 and has a generous private rear garden area suitable for a family. It therefore provides a different type and a more generous size of accommodation than that proposed.
7. Whilst the provision of new homes within the Borough would be a social benefit, the National Planning Policy Framework also seeks to ensure that there is a mix of homes to meet the needs of different groups of the community. The Council's development plan has identified a need to retain small to medium sized homes within the Borough, and Policy H11 provides a clear mechanism for doing so. The conversion of this three bedroom two-storey dwelling to two smaller units of accommodation would not meet the provisions of Policy H11, and would result in the loss of an identified stock of local housing.
8. I have had regard to the other appeal decisions submitted with the appeal documents, however these other decisions relate to properties within different London Borough's where different development plan policies apply. They are not therefore directly comparable to this appeal, which I have considered on its own merits, and taking into account Bexley's development plan policies.
9. I therefore conclude that the property is not suitable for conversion in principle in the light of relevant local and national planning policies. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan, in particular Policy H11 (1) of the UDP, the aims of which are set out above.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elizabeth Pleasant

INSPECTOR