



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2019

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/19/3225029

40 Raymead Avenue, Thornton Heath CR7 7SA

- 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 Mrs Kam Kaur against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 18/01755/FUL, dated 9 April 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2018.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension and loft conversion project to provide 2 x two bedroom self contained flats.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the supply of family houses in the Borough; and
 - whether future occupiers of the proposed flats would have adequate living conditions having particular regard to the size of the split level flat.

Reasons

Supply of family houses

3. The appeal site comprises a 2-storey, end-terrace property on Raymead Avenue. The neighbourhood comprises other houses of similar size and architectural style. In policy terms, DM1.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (LP) states that the Council will permit the redevelopment of residential units where it does not result in the net loss of three bedroom homes (as originally built) or the loss of homes smaller than 130m². The supporting text explains that the policy seeks to ensure that the conversion of single family houses into flats does not further reduce the provision of three bedroom homes.
4. The appellant appears to accept that the proposal is contrary to Policy DM1.2 in that it is a 3 bedroom house. However, she has submitted details relating to housing stock in the West Thornton ward where the appeal site is located, which she states shows there is ample supply of houses in the area. I note the data and the arguments advanced, however the figures produced by the Office of National Statistics do not reduce the weight attached to development plan policies that seek to safeguard family houses from conversion.

5. Furthermore no evidence has been put before me to indicate that the continued use of the dwelling as a three bedroom family home would not be viable or marketable. The appeal proposal would consequently be in direct conflict with LP Policy DM1.2.
6. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in the loss of a three bedroom family house. It would fail to comply with the requirements of Policy DM1.2 of the LP, which seeks to ensure that the redevelopment of residential units does not result in the net loss of 3 bedroom homes (as originally built) or the loss of homes smaller than 130m².

Living conditions

7. The Council has calculated that the proposed first and second floor flat would have a gross internal area of approximately 76 square metres, spread over both floors. The Government's Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) denotes minimum internal space requirements for dwellings, with 79 square metres set as the minimum standard for a two-storey, two-bedroom dwelling intended to accommodate 4 people.
8. The requirements of the NDSS are applied in a local context within Policy 3.5 of The London Plan 2016 (London Plan) and the London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance March 2016 (SPG). Given that the NDSS figures are minimum standards which are intended to act as a benchmark for high design quality, the shortfall in floorspace is not appropriate, and the proposal conflicts with both the NDSS and the London Plan in this regard. I acknowledge the appellant's comments regarding the light levels within the unit and outlook from the windows, but these matters are not sufficient to overcome the unsatisfactory living conditions that would derive from the under-provision of floorspace.
9. I conclude that the proposal would fail to provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers of the flats having particular regard to the size of the split level flat. It would therefore be contrary to the NDSS and the SPG which seek to ensure, amongst other things, that sufficient internal floorspace is provided in residential developments.

Other Matters

10. A store for a single bicycle for the use of future occupants in each of the flats is indicated on the submitted drawings. I am satisfied that alternative provision to accommodate a further cycle in each store could be provided within the site and secured by a planning condition. Consequently, I find no conflict with policy DM30 in relation to this matter.
11. In reaching my decision I note those matters that have been advanced in support of the appeal relating to the economic benefits during the construction phase, the design of the development, the provision of additional housing, the greater mix of units and the accessible location of the site. However, any benefits resulting from the proposal would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR