
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 July 2019

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2019

Appeal Reference: APP/Q5300/W/19/3226800

59 Chesterfield Road, Enfield EN3 6BE

- 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 L Fejziu against the decision of Enfield Council.
 - The application (reference 18/04440/FUL, dated 15 November 2018) was refused by notice dated 10 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as the conversion of a single dwelling to form two one-bedroom flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the supply of housing in the Borough of Enfield.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in a closely built up part of Enfield, with good transport connections, including Enfield Lock railway station, which is within easy walking distance. Local services and facilities are readily accessible, with a primary school in Chesterfield Road itself and a public open space at Albany Park, nearby.
4. Chesterfield Road is characterised by houses built in short terraces or semidetached pairs, with small front gardens and more spacious back gardens. Number 59 is attached to its neighbour at number 61 but it has been substantially remodelled and extended, with the result that the two houses are now rather different from each other in form. On the ground floor, the accommodation at number 59 includes a through living and dining room, with a large kitchen across the back of the property, looking over the neatly tended garden. The first floor provides three bedrooms and a bathroom, while a larger bedroom and its en-suite shower room occupy the second floor. This has been created by the addition of a large box dormer construction and gable extension at roof level.

5. The appeal proposal would involve the internal adaptation of the property to provide two flats, with the separate dwellings, in effect, sharing the existing front door. The ground floor of the existing house would form a one-bedroom flat, with direct access to the back garden. The upper floors would form a second unit, with an allocated section of the rear garden reached by a path.
6. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in February 2019) has the aim of making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity but it also emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12). In addition, it identifies the need to provide a range of housing types, for different groups in the community.
7. These aims are reflected in the Development Plan for the area. 'The London Plan' also emphasises the need to make good use of urban land and to achieve good standards of design, while Policy 3.8 points out the need to provide housing choice. Similarly, Policies CP4, CP5 and CP30 of Enfield's 'Core Strategy' (which was adopted in 2010) also focus on housing quality and the provision of a range of types for residential properties.
8. In this context, Policy DMD5 of Enfield's 'Development Management Document' (which was adopted in 2014) deals specifically with "Residential Conversions". It is intended to protect family accommodation and although it sets out some specific controls (such as those that should prevent "clustering" or undue disturbance in particular streets), the policy also has a general application. In relation to the conversion of family dwellings into self-contained flats, the Policy seeks "compensatory provision" in order not to erode the stock of family dwellings.
9. The appeal project would involve physical changes to the property that would change its nature. It would no longer be a single dwelling unit but would comprise two separate and distinct dwellings, with clear implications for the layout and construction of the building. Realistically, the project would result in the loss of a family-sized dwellinghouse (and there would be no "compensatory provision").
10. The existing four-bedroom house is entirely satisfactory in terms of its layout and it provides a good standard of accommodation. The proposed two new one-bedroom flats would be adequate and, though small, would comply with the relevant formal space standards. Thus, although the scheme would bring about the provision of two dwellings where only one currently exists, there would not be a substantial benefit in terms of housing provision.
11. Although Policy DMD5 imposes a particular constraint on the number of flat conversions that may be considered acceptable in any one street, other Policies are aimed at creating a more general balance of dwelling types, across the Borough as a whole. The application of Policy DMD5 is not the only issue to be determined, therefore, and the main issue in this case needs to be more broadly framed.
12. There is a need for family-sized houses in the Borough of Enfield, whereas the need for smaller homes is being met. Hence, the loss of this unit would conflict with both national and local policies (including Policies in the Development Plan) that are intended to promote a range of housing types, even though it would not infringe the 20% standard for conversions to flats in any given road

that is set out in Policy DMD5. Moreover, the project would tend to erode the character of Chesterfield Road itself, which is clearly dominated by family sized dwellings, in a good location for such homes.

13. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the creation of an additional residential unit does weigh in favour of the appeal. Nevertheless, the scheme would have a harmful effect on the supply of housing in the Borough of Enfield, since it would bring about the loss of a sound family-sized dwellinghouse, in a good location for such a property. In planning terms, the need for such family accommodation outweighs the need for smaller units in the Borough and the benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the objection to it.
14. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including with the Development Plan taken as a whole) and that it would cause actual harm in relation to the supply of a range of housing in the Borough of Enfield. It follows that this appeal must fail and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR