



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2019

by J Moss BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/19/3231709
255-257 Ilford Lane, Ilford IG1 2SB

- 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 City Developments Ilford against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 1093/19, dated 5 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions to provide a total of 8 no self-contained flats to the first, second and third floors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area; and
 - Whether or not the development would result in inconveniences for road users and be prejudicial to highway safety as a result of any additional demand for on street parking.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site sits at the corner of Ilford Lane with Henley Road. Ilford lane is a busy high street and is characterised by blocks of commercial units at ground floor with residential units above. Henley Road is a street of typical Victorian terraced properties off Ilford Lane and is predominantly residential.
4. The building occupying the appeal site is of a more modern construction. It has a flat roof with three storeys to the front, a single storey extension to the rear, and a rear yard area accessed off Henley Road. This type and size of building is found on other corners sites on Ilford Lane, with the adjoining mid-block properties being typically two storeys. Indeed, the property on the corner of Henley Road, opposite the appeal site, is of a similar design and appearance. Both properties include a lower flat roof element to the rear, resulting in a visual break and transition from the three storey elements of these buildings to the traditional two storey terrace properties on Henley Road.

Together, the two corner properties provide a sense of symmetry to the entrance of Henley Road.

5. The scheme proposes a flat roof extension to the rear of the building, resulting in the addition of two further storeys above the existing rear extension. The scheme also proposes an additional storey, making the building four storeys high. The extensions and internal alterations would provide 4 studio flats in addition to the existing accommodation of two, two bedroom and two, one-bedroom flats.
6. Whilst the rear extension would not entirely fill the space between the three-storey element of the existing building and the property at 1 Henley Road, it would significantly erode the existing visual break between the two. The result would be a bulky form of development that would be prominent when viewed from Henley Road and would disrupt the symmetry of the corner properties.
7. Furthermore, although the fourth storey addition would be recessed behind a parapet wall on the front and rear elevation, it would still be a highly visible addition to the building. The building would be significantly taller than the adjoining two storey property and would be prominent within the street scene of both Henley Road and Ilford Lane. It would also further disrupt the symmetry of the two corner properties to Henley Road.
8. In terms of the density of the development, I have had regard to the density matrix (table 3.2) provided within The London Plan March 2016 (LP) under Policy 3.4. I have also had regard to the two recent appeal decisions¹ relating to the appeal site that have been referred to in the submissions. Although limited information has been provided with regard to the development proposed in those cases, I note that both Inspectors consider the density matrix.
9. The site is in an urban setting, as defined in the notes below table 3.2, in an area with a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 2. There is disagreement between the parties with regard to the density of the resultant development, expressed in terms of habitable rooms per hectare (hr/ha), and whether this falls just below or just above the maximum number of hr/ha for development in an urban setting with a PTAL of 2.
10. Either way, the development would result in the site overall being close to or above the upper limit of the parameters of 200 to 450 hr/ha set within table 3.2. In addition, the Council have identified the number of units per hectare (u/ha) would be some 57 units above the maximum of the range of 70-170 u/ha. The appellant has not provided a u/ha figure.
11. I agree with the two previous Inspectors who acknowledge that quantifying the density of the development must be a secondary consideration to its effects on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. However, as the figures provided indicate that the development would be at the upper end of the standards in one regard and exceed the standards in another, this would indicate that the development is seeking to accommodate more than it should on the site. This adds weight to my conclusions with regard to harm on this first main issue.

¹ Reference: APP/W5780/W/16/3145993 and APP/W5780/W/17/3170867

12. My attention has been drawn to the development on the corner of the junction of Jersey Road with Ilford Lane. This is a substantial four storey development incorporating balconies and recessed upper floors. Whilst I acknowledge the appellant's comments with regard to this development, I note the findings of the previous Inspector (in case reference: APP/W5780/W/16/3145993) with regard to this development.
13. The Inspector in that case notes that the context for the building is different to that of the appeal site as the building is not set within a building frontage either side of it. In this regard reference is made to the open space and a petrol filling station either side of the building, which I observed on my visit. They conclude that the visual relationship of the development with its immediate setting is not directly comparable to that of the appeal building, particularly with regard to the uniformity of building heights of neighbouring properties and the similar depth above ground level of the buildings either side of the Henley Road junction. I agree with these conclusions and note that, as the development at the corner of Jersey Road is now complete, its presence as a standalone building on the opposite side of Ilford Lane would not justify the approval of a development of a comparable height and bulk on the appeal site.
14. Having regard to the findings above, I conclude that the development would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area contrary to Policy LP26 (Promoting High Quality Design) of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015 – 2030 March 2018 (RLP). This policy confirms the Council's aim to achieve good design and place making. It also requires, amongst other matters, that development respects the local character of the area, and makes a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location.
15. My attention has also been drawn to Policy 3.5 of the LP which informs that the design of all new housing developments should enhance the quality of local places, taking into account such matters as physical context, local character and density. In view of my conclusions above, the development would not comply with this policy.

Parking and Highway Safety

16. The Council have referred to car parking standards within the LP, which are provided at table 6.2. Using the u/ha figure provided by the Council, the development should provide a maximum number of one parking space per unit. The existing residential units on the site are not served with any off-street parking provision and none is proposed for the new development.
17. In terms of the additional demand for on-street parking that would be generated by the development, I note the appellant's suggestion that there is a high level of public transport available. The site is within an area with a PTAL of 2; the PTAL score range is 0 to 6. As such, a score of 2 suggests that there would be a moderate to low level of public transport service available to the additional occupiers of the site. This does not lead me to conclude that the occupiers would be unlikely to need access to a private car.
18. Furthermore, whilst I acknowledge that the 4 new studio units are more likely to have a single occupier each, it would not necessarily follow that those occupiers are unlikely to own or want to use a car.

19. The Council have confirmed that the proposed provision of cycle storage accords with cycle parking standards set out in table 6.3 of the LP. In this regard, the proposal would accord with Policy 6.9 (Cycling) of the LP and Policy LP23 (Cycle and Car Parking) of the RLP. Nevertheless, such provision should be in addition to, and not instead of, on-site car parking provision.
20. I have not been provided with any additional evidence to lead me to the conclusion that there would be no or low car ownership by the additional occupiers of the development or that the additional demand for on-street car parking would be minimal.
21. In terms of the current situation, there are metered parking spaces on the highway to the side of the site (on Henley Road) and along Ilford Lane. Elsewhere parking is generally unrestricted. I visited the site mid-morning on a week day and noted that, whilst metered parking spaces were available, there was a particularly high level of on-street parking on unrestricted sections of the highway in the area. Parking demand is likely to be even higher in the evenings and on weekends. Third parties have also referred to the existing high demand for on-street parking in the area and the problems that result from this.
22. The development would not comply with the car parking standards referred to in Policy LP23 (Cycle and Car Parking) of the RLP and Policy 6.13 (Parking) of the LP. The supporting text for both policies recognises the issues of congestion, safety, and poor residential amenity that result from the under provision of off-street car parking, particularly where on-street parking is in limited supply. Having regard to the number and type of additional units proposed in this case, it is inevitable that the development would result in additional pressure for on-street parking. In view of the existing situation, such additional pressure would lead to further inconvenience for road users and could lead to harm to highway safety in the area. In reaching this conclusion I have had regard to the findings of the Inspectors on the matter of parking and highway safety in the previous two appeal decisions, referred to above.
23. The Council have also referred to Policy LP22 (Promoting Sustainable Transport) of the RLP in its second reason for refusal. The aim of the policy is to steer transport choices towards more sustainable transport modes. Having regard to my conclusions above, I do not find the development in conflict with the policy. This does not, however, reduce the weight I give to the harm identified on this main issue.

Other Matters

24. My attention has been drawn to policies within both the existing LP and The Draft London Plan July 2019 (Draft LP), which place important emphasis on the delivery of houses of an appropriate range and mix, in accordance with housing delivery requirements. The appellant also suggests that the aims of these existing and emerging policies are supported by the Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance March 2016 (HSPG). I acknowledge that additional accommodation may well be appropriate in principle on this site, in accordance with the policy, emerging policy and guidance referred to by the appellant. Indeed, this aligns with the Government's objective of increasing the supply of housing.

25. The provision of housing would be both a social and economic benefit of the scheme that weighs in its favour. However, this benefit does not outweigh the harm I have identified on the two main issues in this case.
26. I acknowledge that the development would not result in the loss of daylight or sunlight reaching the adjoining or nearby properties. I also note that there is no dispute between the parties that the development complies with Policy 3.5 (Quality and Design of Housing Developments) of the LP, Policy LP29 (Amenity and Internal Space Standards) of the RLP, and guidance provided in the HSPG in terms of the amount and quality of internal and external space provided for the occupiers of the development. Whilst the development would not have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of its occupiers or any nearby occupiers in this regard, such matters would have a neutral effect in the planning balance.
27. Similarly, whilst the appellant's comments with regard to the location of the site in terms of access to the town centre are noted, this matter would also have a neutral effect in terms of weight and would not affect my overall conclusions in this case.

Conclusions

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

J Moss

INSPECTOR