
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 12 November 2019

by N Holdsworth MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

APPEAL A

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/18/3212724

24 Northbrook Road, Ilford, IG1 3BS

- 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 and Mrs Sanghera against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 2075/18, dated 17 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2018.
 - The development proposed is retention of existing premises as use of hotel.
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APPEAL B

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/18/3212722

22 Northbrook Road, Ilford, IG1 3BS

- 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 and Mrs Sanghera against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 0905/18 dated 1 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2018.
 - The development proposed is retention of existing premises as use of hotel.
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Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Whilst the appeals refer to separate properties, they adjoin each other and relate to substantially the same form of development. They were both refused for very similar reasons and the main issues are identical in each case. Accordingly, they have been determined together. The proposals are both retrospective and the appeals have been dealt with on this basis.

Main Issues

3. In both appeals the main issues are:
 - the effect on the residential character of the area, including noise and disturbance; and
 - Whether the loss of permanent residential accommodation is justified.

Reasons

Character

4. The character of Northbrook Road is defined by the residential properties along it. It is a quiet road with little activity visible around the buildings. It therefore has a domestic character typical of suburban roads around this part of London. The previous uses of the buildings, as flats and a House of Multiple Occupation¹, are consistent with this prevailing character.
5. The two properties that are the subject of this appeal are a noticeable exception to this situation. The scale of each hotel operation is significant, with bedrooms across three storeys. In consequence, their use as temporary sleeping accommodation results in a considerably greater amount of activity than would otherwise occur, including from comings and goings to each property late in to the evening. This is an inevitable consequence of hotel uses, where management have relatively little control over the activity and behaviour of guests.
6. This is reflected in the fact that in each case the hotel use has been ongoing for some time and has attracted objections from neighbouring residents. These relate to, amongst other things, concern about noise and disturbance arising from activity associated with these premises. The prevailing quiet, domestic character of the road makes such noise and activity more noticeable. Whilst servicing and travel plans have been provided and could be implemented through conditions, these do not contain measures that would be effective in reducing the noise and disturbance arising from visitors to these premises.
7. Consequently, both proposals materially diminish the residential character of this road. Accordingly, the proposals conflict with the criteria set out in policy LP13 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030 ("Local Plan"), which require, amongst other things, that new hotel development must be compatible with the character and appearance of the area. This is material harm, which must be weighed against the benefits of the proposal.

Whether the loss of permanent residential accommodation is justified

8. Both proposals result in the loss of residential accommodation. This amounts to two large properties which, notwithstanding their current use, appear capable of providing good quality residential accommodation. Policy LP2 and LP13 of the Local Plan states that the Council will resist the net loss of residential accommodation, including where new hotel accommodation is proposed. This is also reflected in policy 3.14 of the London Plan (2016), which states that the loss of housing should be resisted. No compensatory housing provision is made under these proposals. In this respect the proposal conflicts with policies in the development plan.
9. In this case it is argued that, amongst other things, the existing situation represents a more effective use of land. The site is located close to Ilford town centre which has very good public transport links. There are other hotels nearby, including those on York Road, Belgrave Road and Mansfield Road. It is suggested that no hotel development within Ilford, and other centres within the Borough, as envisaged in the Local Plan, has come forward. The proposal would make a small contribution to addressing this deficit, in line with other policies in

¹ As permitted at appeal in 2008, reference APP/W/5780/A/08/2069142

the development plan² including policy 4.5 of the London Plan (2016), which seek to increase the range of visitor accommodation within London.

10. The hotel and the guests associated with it would also support the economic development of Ilford town centre, which falls in close proximity to the site. Accordingly, there would be economic benefits associated with the proposal and there is support for this in the National Planning Policy Framework ("The Framework"). This seeks, amongst other things, to build a strong, competitive economy.
11. Two other appeal decisions³ are cited relating to sites nearby where changes of use from residential to hotel accommodation have been approved. In the case on Ilford Lane, the loss involved a small residential flat with a layout described as suboptimal. In the linked appeals on Mansfield Road, the Inspector found that the road had a mixed character which the hotel development would not detract from.
12. In both of these cases the Inspectors found that, on balance, the benefits of the development outweighed the conflict with the development plan. However, in this case, for the reasons set out in the first main issue, significant weight should be placed upon the harmful effect on the prevailing residential character of the immediate surroundings of the site on Northbrook Road. The proposal would conflict with the requirement in the Framework to create places that are sympathetic to local character and I attach significant weight to the harm that would arise, in consequence. Overall, the considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal, including the economic benefits of the hotel use, are not sufficient to overcome the conflict with the development plan. The loss of permanent residential accommodation is not therefore justified.

Other Matters

13. The Council also refer to conflict with policy LP24 of the Local Plan and policy 7.15 of the London Plan (2016). However, these policies primarily relate to pollution. The harm to the character of the area arising from noise and disturbance associated with each premises is not of a scale that would amount to pollution. The proposal does not therefore conflict with these development plan policies. However, this finding has no bearing on the outcome of either appeal.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, the proposals conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations that outweigh this finding. Both appeals should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR

² as cited in the appeal statement, provided by the appellant.

³ APP/W5780/W/17/3182680 and APP/W5780/W/17/3182696; APP/W5780/W/17/3185999.