



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2019

by M Heron BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/19/3237108

43 Wellwood Road, Seven Kings, Ilford IG3 8TT

- 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 Jasbir M Rayatt (Rayatt Holdings Ltd) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 1112/19, dated 7 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of an existing dwelling into 2 x 2 bedroom flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the Borough's supply of family housing;
 - the character and appearance of the area, and
 - the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

Family Housing

3. The explanatory text associated with Policy LP5 of the Redbridge Local Plan (LP) shows that the Outer North East London Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a significant need for larger, family sized, homes in the Borough. Such homes are identified as properties with three or more bedrooms by Policies LP5 and LP6 of the LP. In addition, the text associated with Policy LP6 of the LP shows that there has been a slow erosion of the Borough's existing larger housing stock. In response to this, Policy LP6 only supports the conversion of larger homes into smaller self-contained units where, amongst other things, the development provides at least one larger family sized home on the ground floor. It also seeks to ensure that conversions take place within a Metropolitan, District or Local Centre.
4. Submitted plans show that No 43 is an existing five-bedroomed family sized home and I have no substantive evidence to show that it is too large to be occupied by a single family. The proposal seeks permission to convert this dwelling into two, two-bedroom, flats. The site is not within a Metropolitan,

District or Local Centre and the conversion therefore conflicts with Policy LP6 in this regard. Moreover, the proposal would result in the loss of a family sized home. Regardless of the floor areas of the two proposed flats, they would not qualify as family homes as neither would provide three bedrooms.

Consequently, the scheme would not compensate for the loss of the family accommodation at ground floor, contrary to another requirement of Policy LP6.

5. The proposal would add to the mix of smaller market housing available in the Borough. However, this would be at the expense of a family sized unit for which, on the basis of the evidence before me, there is an identified need. The cumulative loss of such family sized accommodation would, over time, harm the objectives of maintaining and increasing the supply of the larger units that are suitable for family occupation in the Borough.
6. I appreciate that there are examples of properties within the street which have been converted to flatted units. However, it would appear that these conversions took place prior to the adoption of the LP. Overall, in the absence of details about when or how such developments were assessed, they carry little weight in my assessment of the appeal scheme, which I have performed based on its individual planning merits. I also note that the flats would be occupied by two brothers, and their respective families, who wish to have a degree of privacy. However, this is not a reason to permit a scheme which would further frustrate the objectives of the Council with regard to family housing. This is so even if these brothers would have to seek alternative accommodation in the absence of permission for this proposal.
7. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would adversely affect the supply of family housing in the Borough. It would conflict with Policy LP6 of the LP insofar as it seeks to direct conversions to Metropolitan, District or Local Centres and maintain the supply of larger family homes due to a recognised shortage of such accommodation in the Borough.

Character and Appearance

8. This part of Wellwood Road is characterised by two storey, terraced, properties. No 43 is a double fronted, mid-terraced dwelling, which is similar in architectural composition to nearby properties. It has a section of hardstanding to front which provides off-street parking for two vehicles.
9. The proposal would not result in external alterations to No 43 and any subdivision of its rear external amenity space would not be apparent from the streetscene. In addition, the number and layout of off-street parking spaces would remain unaltered. Indeed, the only discernible change to the appearance of the appeal site would be additional refuse bins stored to the front. This would not be a significant alteration. Taking the above into account, although the site is not within a town centre and there have been flatted conversions in the area, I find that the proposed residential intensification would be unlikely to notably alter the character of the street.
10. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore accord with Policies LP6 and LP26 of the LP insofar as they seek to ensure that proposals respect and integrate with local character.

Living Conditions

11. The proposal would not increase the number of vehicles utilising the off-street parking spaces to the front of No 43. Overall, whilst there would likely be additional comings and goings as a result of the proposed residential intensification, I am not persuaded that one additional dwelling at the site would cause significant noise and disturbance to neighbours.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would accord with Policies LP6 and LP26 insofar as they seek to ensure proposals do not harm the living conditions at properties within the area in relation to noise and disturbance.

Other Consideration

13. Although not within its decision notice, the Council raises concern that the proposal would increase parking stress in the area, to the detriment of the living conditions at neighbouring properties. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for a substantive reason, I have not considered this matter further as it is not determinative to my decision.

Planning Balance

14. The Government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing. However, the proposal for one additional dwelling at the site would make only a minimal contribution to the Borough's housing stock. Similarly, economic benefits through conversion and occupation would also be minimal. In this context, I give limited weight to these social and economic benefits.
15. I have found that the proposal would not harm the character of the area or the living conditions at neighbouring properties in terms of noise and disturbance. However, these are requirements of the development plan and are therefore neutral in the overall balance.
16. On the other hand, I have found that the proposal would adversely affect the supply of family homes in a way that would clearly be contrary to the development plan. This is a matter to which I give significant weight.
17. I note that the Council does not consider that it can now raise objection to the fact that the proposal would not provide a ground floor family sized home in line with one of the requirements of Policy LP6 of the LP. However, I am required to consider the proposal against all of the relevant provisions of the Council's development plan. Consequently, this is not a material consideration which outweighs the conflict I have found with the development plan.
18. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the harm that I have identified would outweigh the limited social and economic benefits associated with one additional dwelling. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations which outweigh this conflict.

Conclusion

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

M Heron

INSPECTOR