
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2020

by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/19/3238501

2 Vaughan Gardens, Cranbrook, Ilford IG1 3NZ

- 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 A Hanif against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 1325/19, dated 19 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is conversion of single dwelling into 2 x 3 bedroom flats (C3) and alterations to driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the description of development from the Council's Decision Notice as this is a better description of the proposed development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on 1) the supply and choice of housing available within the Borough with regard to development plan policy, 2) the living conditions of future occupants with regard to the provision of amenity space, 3) pedestrian and highway safety with regard to parking provision and 4) the promotion of sustainable forms of transport with regard to cycle parking provision.

Reasons

Supply and choice of housing

4. The appeal property is a detached two storey dwelling located in a predominantly residential area. The proposal involves the conversion of the existing single dwelling into two flats.
5. Policy LP6 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) permits the conversion of a larger home into smaller self-contained units where: (a) It is located in a Metropolitan, District or Local Centres; (b) The gross floor area of the property exceeds 130 sqm where two units are proposed and exceeds 180 sqm where three or more units are proposed; (c) No significant loss of character or amenity occurs to the area as a result of increased traffic, noise and/or general disturbance; (d) Appropriate car and cycle parking provision are provided in accordance with London Plan standards; (e) It meets the national space standards; and (f) The conversion provides at least one larger family sized

- home of 74 sqm (3 bed plus) on the ground floor with access to a dedicated rear garden of the converted home.
6. Policy LP5 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) states that there will be focus on the provision of larger family homes (3 bed plus).
 7. The appeal property is not located in a Metropolitan, District or Local Centre. The property is located in an established residential area where the Council are seeking to protect dwellings for family occupation at lower densities as part of its strategy to provide a range of house types to meet the housing needs of different groups in the Borough.
 8. It may be argued that the impact of the proposal on overall housing numbers would be very low, however the cumulative impact of such incremental changes would have significant effects.
 9. The Council consider that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character of the area generally. Notwithstanding the loss of the large single dwelling as considered above, I find that the generic use of the property for residential purposes to be consistent with the prevailing character of the area. This is due to the fact that the surrounding area appears to contain a range of residential properties of various styles and sizes. In this context, I do not find that harm would be caused to the character of the area.
 10. The appellant has commented that the site is located within walking distance of Gants Hill Town Centre and Ilford High Street. This is not in dispute; however, the property remains outside of the areas that the policy permits the conversion of larger homes into smaller self-contained units.
 11. The appellant has commented that the flats would still be three-bedrooms i.e. family units. In this regard, the proposal would appear to comply with strand (f) of the policy, however the list of criteria is not selective, and I have found that the proposal would not comply with the requirement of being located within a Metropolitan, District or Local Centre.
 12. Therefore, on the matter of the loss of a large home that is not within a Metropolitan, District or Local Centre, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence that would support a departure from the development plan. Therefore, the change of use of the premises would result in the loss of a larger home, unacceptably harming the supply and choice of residential properties in the Borough, contrary to the aims of Policies LP5 and LP6 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018).
 13. The Council's reason for refusal that relates to the supply and choice of housing available within the Borough states that the proposal would be contrary to Policy LP26 of the Local Plan. This policy concerns the promotion of high-quality design. I do not find it relevant to the matter of supply and choice of housing.

Living conditions of future occupants

14. The Council have referred to the provision of external amenity space in their reasons for refusal. The Council have commented that it appears the amenity space at the rear of the property would be for the use of the ground floor flat only, with the upper flat having no access to the space. The appellant has outlined that the rear garden is proposed to be shared between both units and act as a communal garden. From the submitted plans, there does not appear to

be any physical barrier that would prevent the occupiers of the upper flat from accessing the rear garden.

15. Policy LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) outlines that the Council will ensure that new development will provide external private or communal amenity space to meet the needs of occupants. The Policy sets out the area of space that would be required. The proposal would provide 145sqm of communal amenity space. I find that this would be an acceptable amount in terms of the overall size of the units to which they relate.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants of the development. It would comply with the requirement of Policies LP26 and LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) to ensure that new development provides external private amenity space to meet the needs of occupants and the provision of high standards of accommodation for housing in terms of, amongst other things, external communal amenity space.

Pedestrian and highway safety

17. The appeal site currently includes off-street parking for one vehicle. The proposal includes the provision of an additional hard-surfaced area at the front of the property to provide an additional parking space giving one space each for each of the proposed flats.
18. The Council have expressed concern in relation to the addition of another vehicle crossover for the site, particularly due to the dimensions of the proposed hardstanding which would require a vehicle to be parked at an angle to the highway. The Council consider that the proposed crossover, in such close proximity to the adjoining crossover, would result in harm to pedestrian safety.
19. I find that the traffic movement that would be associated with the use of any such crossover to be relatively low, relating to only one vehicle. Combined with the satisfactory level of visibility that would be achievable, I do not consider that this would create unacceptable or demonstrable harm to pedestrian safety. The proposed access arrangements would not be uncommon for a large dwelling (albeit conversion) whereby two driveways are proposed. It would not be wholly out of character with similar arrangements in the street where properties have accesses across their full width to provide parking which is at times combined with the neighbour's access.
20. The Council have also commented that the new crossover would also result in the loss of a lamp post with no scope in front of the site for its replacement. I have not been provided with any evidence to support this and I am not convinced that there would not be an alternative location in the street for the lamp post and do not consider it would be sufficient grounds to dismiss the appeal on this basis.
21. The Council have expressed concern that not having a satisfactory vehicle crossover would result in an unacceptable demand for on-street parking. The Officer Report somewhat contradictorily comments that a scheme with no parking would be in line with parking standards.
22. At the time of my visit, mid-morning on a weekday, I observed that on-street parking was taking place in the vicinity of the appeal site. The on-street parking that I observed was not causing an obstruction or danger to the use of

the highway. I also noted that the site is close to bus stops served by several bus services which connect to Gants Hill Underground station, around 0.5 miles away.

23. For these reasons, I find that the highways impact of the development in relation to parking would not result in an unacceptable impact on pedestrian or highway safety or result in cumulative impacts on the road network that would be severe. It would comply with Policies LP22 and LP23 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018), that seek to ensure appropriate levels of parking is made available for all developments, and the promotion of sustainable transport.
24. The Council's reason for refusal that relates to the pedestrian and highway safety effect of the proposed development states that the proposal would be contrary to Policy LP38 of the Local Plan. This policy concerns the protection of trees and enhancement of landscape. I do not find it relevant to the matter of pedestrian and highway safety.

Sustainable transport and cycle parking

25. The Council have commented that due to the lack of secure sheltered cycle parking, the proposal would lead to an unsatisfactory development, with an over-reliance on access by the private car, failing to promote sustainable forms of travel.
26. The proposed plans show that a bicycle shed would be provided to the side of the property. I accept that further details regarding this facility would be needed, for example how it would be made secure, and how residents would gain access, however such matters could be secured by condition in the event the appeal were allowed. The Officer report makes the same point, that such details could be secured by planning condition, although the Council have refused planning permission due to the lack of appropriate facilities.
27. Therefore, in the event the appeal were allowed, a condition could be imposed requiring the submission of cycle parking details. This would ensure that the development would comply with Policies LP23 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) and Policy 6.9 of the London Plan (2016), that seek to ensure, amongst other things that appropriate facilities for cycle parking are provided in development in order to contribute to the promotion of sustainable transport.

Conclusion

28. Although I have found no harm in respect of the living conditions of future occupants, pedestrian and highway safety, and the promotion of sustainable forms of transport, this does not overcome the harm I have found to the supply and choice of housing.
29. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR