The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020

by C Osgathorp BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/19/3240209
60 Woodlands Road, Ilford IG1 1JN

- 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 Wahid against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
- The application Ref 5079/17, dated 1 November 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2019.
- The development proposed is a 6-bedroom guest house.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development shown in the planning application form and the Council's decision notice includes the term 'retention', which is not development as defined under the above Act. I have therefore omitted that word from the description of development in the banner heading above.

3. At my site visit I observed that the change of use of the property to a 6-bedroom guest house has already begun. The layout of the guest house accords with drawing No 2419/1 Rev B and I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the change of use that has been carried out.

Main Issue

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on (i) the stock of housing in the borough; and, (ii) the character of the area, with particular regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

Stock of housing

5. The use of the appeal property as a guest house has resulted in the loss of residential accommodation. It is a large property, with well-proportioned rooms, and good levels of light and outlook. Notwithstanding its current use, the property would provide good quality housing.

6. Policy LP2 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015 - 2030 ('RLP') states that the Council will deliver a minimum target of 16,845 new dwellings by, amongst other things, resisting the net loss of residential accommodation. Policy LP13 of the RLP sets out criteria for new hotel and tourist accommodation, including

that the proposal does not result in the loss of residential accommodation. Furthermore, Policy 3.14 of the London Plan 2016 ('LP') states, along with other things, that the loss of housing should be resisted.

7. The proposal has resulted in the loss of residential accommodation, which is harmful to the stock of housing in the borough. It is therefore contrary to Policies LP2 and LP13 of the RLP and Policy 3.14 of the LP, which amongst other things, seek to resist the loss of residential accommodation. It also conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework'), which seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes.

Character

8. No 60 Woodlands Road is located in a predominantly residential street. Whilst there are commercial uses in the wider area, Woodlands Road has a prevailing residential character consisting of terraced properties. The part of Woodlands Road where the appeal site is located is a quiet one-way street with modest levels of activity and vehicular traffic.

9. The adjoining properties to each side of the appeal property, at Nos 58 and 62 Woodlands Road, are used as guest houses. The proposal at No 60 has added to this visitor accommodation, which has resulted in a row of 3 properties that are used as guest houses.

10. The proposal has therefore contributed to a cluster of visitor accommodation, which is at odds with the prevailing residential character of the street. The additional visitor accommodation, consisting of 6 guest bedrooms, increases activity and comings and goings. Given the nature of visitor accommodation, this inevitably includes comings and goings in late evening, causing noise and disturbance. Having regard to the otherwise quiet residential character of the road, this would be particularly noticeable. In this respect, I have had regard to objections from local residents, which amongst other things, relate to general disturbance with people coming and going and making noise late at night.

11. Whilst a service management plan and a parking & travel plan have been provided, these would not mitigate the noise and disturbance caused by the comings and goings of visitors.

12. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal is harmful to the character of the area in respect of noise and disturbance. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy LP13 of the RLP, which states, amongst other things, that new hotel development must be compatible with the character and appearance of the area. It is also contrary to paragraph 127 of the Framework, which, amongst other things, states that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

13. Policy 4.5 of the London Plan aims to support London's visitor economy and stimulate its growth. It seeks to achieve 40,000 net additional hotel bedrooms by 2036, of which 10% should be wheelchair accessible. In this respect, the guest house makes a modest contribution towards meeting the need for additional visitor accommodation. Having regard to its location close to Ilford town centre, the guest house would support economic growth of the local economy and provide employment. The proposal therefore provides economic

benefits, which support the economic objective set out in the Framework to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy.

14. The appellant has drawn my attention to a planning permission[1] at 17 Wellesley Road for the change of use from opticians and a first floor flat to a hotel. Full details of that case are not before me. Nevertheless, I have determined the appeal scheme on its individual planning merits.

15. I have also had regard to the 2 appeal decisions[2] referred to by the appellant. These relate to changes of use from residential to hotel accommodation, which were allowed. In the appeal at No 142 Ilford Lane, the Inspector stated that the proposal would result in the loss of a small one-bedroom dwelling with a suboptimal layout. In respect of the linked appeals at No 52 Mansfield Road, the Inspector found that whilst the use may have increased activity on site, this would be commensurate with the other commercial activities in and around the site and is unlikely to have significantly altered the established character of the area.

16. The Inspectors in both appeals acknowledged that the loss of residential accommodation would conflict with the development plan, however in the planning balance they found that the benefits of the development outweighed the conflict.

17. In this case, I have found that the proposal results in the loss of good quality residential accommodation, which harms the stock of housing in the borough and conflicts with the development plan. Furthermore, the proposal has a harmful effect on the prevailing residential character of Woodlands Road, to which I afford significant weight. On balance, I find that the economic benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm.

18. The Council has cited Policy LP5 of the RLP in the decision notice, which I consider is not relevant to the main issues as the appeal scheme is not for housing development. Nevertheless, this would not alter my decision.

Conclusion

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

C Osgathorp

INSPECTOR

[1] Application ref 4535/16. Decision notice dated 24 May 2017.
[2] APP/W5780/W/17/3185999; APP/W5780/W/17/3182680 & APP/W5780/W/17/3182696