



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: 24 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/19/3238447

646 to 648 and 650a and 650b, Cranbrook Road, Ilford IG6 1HJ

- 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 P Singh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 2985/19, dated 24 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with dormers and roof alterations to existing structure, and erection of 2 storey structure with loft conversion containing 3x1 and 1x2 bedroom flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have taken the site address from the Council's Decision Notice as this is a more precise description of the location as it includes reference to all the properties within the appeal site.
3. I have also taken the description of development from the Council's Decision Notice as this is a more precise description of the proposed development. It is also similar to that given in the Planning Appeal Form.
4. The application plans show a rear balcony to the proposed two-storey building and 3 parking spaces. As part of the appeal documentation, the appellant has replaced this balcony with a recessed roof terrace, and also provided an additional parking space, relocated the cycle parking and incorporated a privacy screen to the proposed front balcony. As this is a minor amendment, and the Council's concerns on the proposal are clear in their evidence, I do not consider that their interests would be prejudiced if I take these amended plans into account. I shall therefore determine the appeal on the basis of plan number 1647/02 Rev A.
5. The Council's fifth reason for refusal relates to the effect of the development on highway safety in relation to parking. The reason for refusal specifies being contrary to Policy LP29 of the Local Plan. This policy relates to Amenity and Internal Space Standards and is not relevant to the matter of highway safety and parking. I have been supplied with a copy of Policy LP23 of the Local Plan that relates to car parking provision. Therefore, I have assumed that the reference to LP29 in the reason for refusal is an error and have considered

Policy LP23 in relation to the highway safety and parking implications of the development.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on 1) the character and appearance of the area 2) the living conditions of future occupants of the development 3) living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties with regard to outlook, privacy, daylight and sunlight, and 4) highway safety with regard to the provision of parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site comprises a detached two-storey building with a flat roof single storey extension and rear yard with car parking. The property is mixed use, with retail on the ground floor and two flats on the first floor. The property is located on a corner position. The main elevation fronts onto Cranbrook Road which is a busy road with a variety of uses including the parade of commercial premises on which the appeal site is located. The side elevation fronts onto Bute Road which is a residential street predominantly made up of two-storey semi-detached and terraced properties.
8. The appeal proposal involves the erection of a two-storey building containing three flats, the third of which would be accommodated within the roof space, linked to the existing building via a remodelled existing single storey rear extension. Alterations to the existing building would include the creation of an additional flat in the roof space and associated reconfiguration, including the provision of outdoor amenity space on the roof of the existing flat-roof single storey extension. The proposal would provide dormer windows to both the existing and proposed buildings, balconies and recessed roof terraces, and undercroft parking beneath the new building.
9. Some aspects of the design of the proposed building would reflect that of the existing corner building with similar roofs, fenestration and materials being incorporated. The resultant building would be very close to those on Bute Road and would create an almost continuous run of built form extending from Cranbrook Road along Bute Road, eroding the separation that currently exists in the arrangement of development on the appeal site and in the surrounding area. The retention of the flat-roof single storey extension and its incorporation into the overall development would create an uneasy bond with the existing building due to its sudden fluctuation in style and size. The resulting appearance would be unattractively stretched out along Bute Road, and due to a stark difference in design, the relationship with the residential property at 2 Bute Road would also appear particularly disjointed given its close proximity to the appeal proposal.
10. Despite reference by the appellant to other balconies in the area, the balconies in this context would appear out of character, when viewed in the context of the design of the adjacent residential property and the other properties on Bute Road. Similarly, the proposed glass balustrade that spans the single storey link between the two buildings, due to its length and material, would be out of character, and due to its elevated position, it would be unnecessarily prominent and visible from Cranbrook Road.

11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) which seeks to deliver high quality design in all development within the borough, encourage and promote innovative and good design, and refuse development of poor design, that does not take available opportunities to improve an area's character and quality. The policy also requires that development makes a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location and is well integrated.
12. The proposal would also be contrary to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) which seek to ensure, amongst other things, that the design of new buildings should enhance the character of the area and be of high-quality design.

Living conditions of future occupants of the development

13. In addition to the existing two flats above the retail unit, the proposal creates an additional four flats on the site. Policy LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) outlines that the Council has adopted and will implement the National Internal Space Standards for new dwellings when making decisions on new development proposals for housing. All planning proposals for housing development in the borough will be required to comply with the National Standards. The Council have made reference to the size of Unit 4 not complying with the National Internal Space Standards and resulting in substandard living accommodation.
14. The Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) (DCLG 2015) outlines that a one-bedroom, two-person flat such as Unit 4 should be 50sqm in area. There is some disagreement as to the size of the unit. The Council have referred to it being 47sqm, the submitted plan states that it is 50sqm and the appellants statement refers to it being 48.5sqm on the amended plans, which the Council have not disputed. Based on this area, the proposal, in relation to Unit 4, would fall short of the size outlined in the NDSS. Despite this conflict, I find that acceptable living conditions in relation to the size of the unit would exist and the minor difference would not result in substandard living accommodation being provided.
15. The Council have also referred to the provision of amenity space in their reasons for refusal. This is in relation to Units 4 and 5. Policy LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) outlines that the Council will ensure that new development will provide external private amenity space to meet the needs of occupants by seeking a minimum of 5sqm private amenity space for flatted developments for a 1-2 person dwelling, such as Units 4 and 5.
16. Unit 4 includes a balcony measuring 5sqm and Unit 5 includes a roof terrace measuring 5sqm. Notwithstanding the design implications of these installations and the effect on the living conditions of surrounding residents, solely in relation to the amount of amenity space that is proposed, I find that this would be an acceptable amount in terms of the overall size of the units to which they relate.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposal would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants of the development. It would comply with the requirement of Policy LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) to ensure that new development provides external private amenity space to meet the needs

of occupants. There would be a conflict with Policy LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018), Policy 3.5 of the London Plan (2016) and the London Plan Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2016) with regard to providing the internal floor area outlined in the NDSS. I find that acceptable living conditions in relation to the size of the unit would exist and the minor difference would not result in substandard living accommodation being provided.

Living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties

18. In relation to the surrounding residential units, the proposed two storey building would be situated between the two flats above the retail unit that is on the appeal site and a semi-detached dwelling at 2 Bute Road. It would also be adjacent to a flat above the existing commercial unit adjacent to the site.
19. Due to its design, scale and siting, the proposed two storey building would not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupants of 2 Bute Road with regard to outlook, daylight and sunlight. Due to the recessed nature of the roof terraces and the siting of the balcony on the front elevation overlooking an active street-scene and incorporating a privacy screen, these elements would not have an unacceptable impact on the privacy of the occupants of 2 Bute Road.
20. The Council comment that the proposed building would be 9m from the first-floor habitable room windows in the rear elevation of 642 Cranbrook Road. Due to the design, scale and siting of the development, I find that the impact in terms of daylight, sunlight and outlook would not be unacceptable. As this is a first floor flat, the impact would be less substantial than were the habitable room windows located in the ground floor. I find that the distance that would be maintained and the angle of the proposed building relative to the windows would ensure that acceptable levels of privacy are maintained. Similarly, for these reasons, I do not find that the proposal would create an unreasonable level of enclosure of the rear garden of 642 Cranbrook Road.
21. In relation to the effect on the living conditions of the two existing flats above the retail unit, from the information before me, it would appear that the proposed building is around 6m from first-floor habitable room windows. I find that due to its scale, comprising the first-floor gable wall and roof, and its siting, the proposed building would have an unacceptable impact on the outlook from the kitchen and bedroom 2 of Unit 1.
22. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties with regard to outlook. It would be contrary to Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) which requires, amongst other things, that development does not result in an adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in relation to outlook.
23. The proposal would also be contrary to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) and the London Plan Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2016) which seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings, in relation to overshadowing.

Highway safety and parking provision

24. The appeal site at present includes a rear yard area that is identified as customer parking for the retail unit. The proposed development results in the removal of part of the rear yard area where an area of undercroft parking is proposed. A total of four parking spaces are proposed. The amended plan indicates that two would be for the residential units and one each for retail staff and customers.
25. 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. I also observed that there was also capacity elsewhere on Bute Road to park a vehicle. 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.
26. The existing retail unit is relatively modest in size, and as the appellant points out, is located on a parade where no other units have similar off-street parking. In addition, the size of the proposed residential units, the provision of nearby public transport and the proposed provision of cycle parking, make it less likely that all occupants would own a car.
27. For these reasons, I find that the highways impact of the development in relation to parking would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in cumulative impacts on the road network that would be severe. It would comply with Policies LP23 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018), and Policy 6.13 of the London Plan (2016) that seek to ensure appropriate levels of parking is made available for all developments.

Other Matters

28. In support of the appeal, the appellant has referred to the provision of additional housing, in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the development of an infill site on previously developed land. Representations have also been received supporting the proposal in relation to the provision of additional housing. I have considered these matters, however I do not find that the provision of additional housing or the development of an infill site on previously developed land would overcome the harm I have identified would be caused by the proposal.
29. The appellant has referred to the enhancement that would be made to the amenity space provided for the flats above the retail unit. I give this argument little weight as this is largely a private benefit and could be achievable without the development taking place (subject to any necessary approval).
30. The appellant has also referred to the development being in a sustainable location. Whilst I do not disagree, I find that this, even when combined with the provision of housing, would not override the harm I have identified would be caused by the proposal.

Conclusion

31. On the matter of the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, I have found that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. On the

matter of living conditions of future occupants of the development, I have found that these would not be unacceptable. On the matter of living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties, I have found that the development would have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupants of the flat above the retail unit. On the matter of the effect of the proposed development on highway safety with regard to the provision of parking, I have found that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

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

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR