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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2020

**by Sarah Dyer BA BTP MRTPI MCMI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/C/19/3241775**

**Land and premises at 122 Halbutt Street, Dagenham RM9 5AP**

- The appeal is made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Andrius Cikanavicius against an enforcement notice issued by the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
  - The enforcement notice was issued on 7 November 2019.
  - The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is without planning permission, the unauthorised material change of use of a single family dwelling house to a House in Multiple Occupation.
  - The requirements of the notice are to:
    - Cease the use as a house of multiple occupation
    - Remove all alterations and fixtures enabling the conversion to a house of multiple occupation
    - Remove all consequent waste material from the premises.
  - The period for compliance with the requirements is 6 months.
  - The appeal is proceeding on the grounds set out in section 174(2)[b] and [f] of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed, and the enforcement notice is upheld.

### Procedural Matters

2. I am also dealing with two other appeals which have been submitted by the appellant in respect of change of use to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at 603A and 603B Heathway, Dagenham (Appeal References: APP/Z5060/C/19/3241776 and 3241777). During the site visits the appellant queried the relationship between planning regulations and the licensing arrangements for HMO, both of which are the responsibility of the Council. I recommended to the appellant that he should await the outcome of the appeals and then seek further advice from the Council on this issue. Both he and the Council officer present were agreeable to this.
3. There is an Article 4 direction in place which removes the right to change the use of a building from a Class C3<sup>1</sup> (dwelling house) to a Class C4<sup>1</sup> (house in multiple occupation) as 'permitted development' under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended. For this reason, planning permission is required for the change of use which the Council alleges has taken place.

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<sup>1</sup> Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.

### **Ground (b)**

4. An appeal under ground (b) is that the matters to which the notice relates have not occurred. This is a legal ground of appeal and the onus of proof lies with the appellant. The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities.
5. The appellant says that the property is let out to a single family and is not used as a HMO. I have not been provided with a copy of the tenancy agreement. On the other hand, the Council consider that the property has been used as an HMO and have provided a copy of a Property Licence Application (PLA) which refers to three households being accommodated in the property and three separate lettings. The PLA is dated 20 August 2019. Notwithstanding that the applicant for the PLA does not appear to have been the appellant, he is named as the freeholder of the property. However, he has not provided any information to explain the inconsistency between the contents of the PLA and his contention that the premises are occupied by a single family.
6. I observed that there were locks on the doors of the bedrooms, that the shared kitchen had two fridge freezers and that the front room is furnished as a bedroom leaving a very constricted shared lounge space. An outbuilding in the garden appeared to be used for storage but it also contained a toilet and shower. These observations lead me to conclude that the house may not be being used to accommodate a single household or may not have been used for this purpose in the recent past. On this basis I cannot be sure that the house was not being used as a HMO on the date when the notice was issued which is the relevant date for the consideration of an appeal under ground (b).
7. Even if the tenancy agreement were to show occupation by a single household, the appellant has not demonstrated on the balance of probabilities that the house was not in use as a HMO on the date when the notice was issued. Therefore, the appeal under ground (b) fails.

### **Ground (f)**

8. An appeal under ground (f) is on the basis that the steps required by the notice to be taken, or the activities required by the notice to cease, exceed what is necessary to remedy any breach of planning control which may be constituted by those matters or, as the case may be, to remedy any injury to amenity which has been caused by any such breach.
9. The appellants only argument is that the steps are excessive because the property is let to a single family and not used as a HMO. This is the same argument as was made in regard to ground (b) and I have not been persuaded by it in relation to that ground. Even if the use as a HMO has ceased, which given the lack of evidence and my observations on site, I am not convinced has happened, the presence of lockable doors and the internal layout of the building and the outbuilding is such that a HMO use could resume. It follows that I do not find the steps required by the notice to be excessive and the appeal under ground (f) also fails.

## **Conclusions**

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should not succeed, and I shall uphold the enforcement notice.

*Sarah Dyer*

Inspector