



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2020

by Peter Mark Sturgess BSc (Hons), MBA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Decision date: Monday, 18 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/20/3244194
119 Victoria Road, Romford, RM1 2LX

- 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 C. Hibbett against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P1481.19, dated 17 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is provision of a new second floor on an existing two storey detached unit (119A Victoria Road) and conversion from storage to residential use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: 1) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the future occupiers of the dwellings; 2) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; 3) the contribution of the proposal to the delivery of housing within the borough.

Procedural Matters

3. The appellant has made reference to details he supplied to the Council in order to overcome the objections the Council had to the proposal. I have made this decision on the basis of the plans the Council used in its determination of the planning application.

Reasons

4. The appeal building is currently two storey and has been used for storage in the past. It is constructed of brick and has a flat roof surrounded by a parapet wall. It is proposed to add a second floor to the building and convert it to three flats, one on each floor. The flat roof and parapet wall would be reproduced above the new second floor. It is set back from and is at 90 degrees to Victoria Road and lies along an access way between two commercial properties which front on to Victoria Road. It is entirely surrounded by hard surfaces.

Living conditions – future occupiers

5. The location for the proposed flats is not conducive to a high-quality residential environment by reason of the dominance of the hard-surfaced areas, the close proximity of other buildings and the lack of any opportunity to provide any

landscaping/planting. The ground floor flat would have a poor outlook on to a hard-surfaced access way serving the workshop/garage at the rear and the walls of other buildings. It would not benefit from an outdoor area which would be useable and private. The proposed outdoor area is sandwiched between the wall of the appeal building and the area around workshop/garage to the rear. Proposed flats 2 and 3 in the upper floors of the extended building would have no access to private outdoor space.

6. The development plan for the area includes the London Plan (2016) (LP) and the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, Development Plan Document, 2008 (DPD) which seek, among other things, to ensure that housing development is of the highest quality, to protect and enhance London's residential environment and its attractiveness as a place to live. DPD Policy DC4 concerns conversions to residential use. Among other things, it expects such development to provide suitable private sitting out/amenity space and reasonable outlook. The poor outlook from the ground floor flat and the failure to provide satisfactory outdoor amenity space for any of the proposed flats would result in poor living conditions for prospective occupiers and hence would clearly conflict with this policy and with LP Policy 3.5 which expects development to be of the highest quality to ensure that London's residential environment remains an attractive place to live. These policies are supported by the guidance in the Council's adopted Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 'Design for Living' (2010), which advises that every home should have access to suitable private and/or communal amenity space. The proposal does not follow the design guidance in this respect, which adds weight to my view that the appeal proposal would not provide suitable living conditions for the potential occupiers.

Character and appearance of the area

7. The area is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial uses accommodated in a variety of buildings from low single storey to two storey brick and tile.
8. The appeal proposal would introduce a three-storey building into an area characterised by two and single storey buildings, its height would further emphasise its flat roof which is not typical in the area and its bulk, massing and scale would further dominate and overshadow the narrow access to the site. In these respects, the appeal proposal would fail to maintain, enhance or improve the character and appearance of the local area in terms of its scale, height and design as required by Policies CP17 and DC61 of the DPD. Furthermore, Policies 3.5 and 7.4 of the LP expect that housing developments are of the highest quality in relation to their context and the wider environment and have regard to the form, function and structure of the area. The height, size and positioning of the development would not respect the existing pattern of development and scale of development in the area which is predominantly one or two storey.

Contribution of the proposal to the delivery of housing within the Borough

9. The 'Housing Delivery Test: 2019 Measurement' shows that the Borough is substantially below (less than 75%) the housing delivery requirement over the previous three years, at 33%. I am therefore required to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development to the proposal. Paragraph 11, d), ii) requires that I grant planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when

assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), taken as a whole.

10. I identify the contribution the appeal proposal would make to the supply of houses within the Borough, the contribution the development would make to the economy during its construction phase and the contribution the occupiers of the development would make to the economy of the area as benefits of the proposed development. Given the scale of the proposed development however, these benefits would be relatively small.
11. Overall, the adverse impacts of the development I have identified, the poor outlook which would be experienced by potential occupiers, the lack of usable private outdoor space and the effect it would have on the character and appearance of the area significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the appeal proposal, when assessed against the policies in the Framework, taken as a whole.

Other Matters

12. Reference has been made to other residential developments along Victoria Road which occupy a similar position to the appeal building, but they are not directly comparable and do not justify the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

13. The appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole. In the absence of other material considerations to outweigh that conflict, the appeal must be dismissed.

Peter Mark Sturgess

INSPECTOR