



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3244240

9 Crowther Avenue, Brentford, TW8 9QJ

- 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 D. Xavier against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00330/9/P2, dated 3 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing dwelling into 2 flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The living conditions of future occupiers of the first floor flat, having particular regard to private outdoor space.
 - Whether the building is suitable for conversion having regard to local policies on sustainable mixed communities

Preliminary Matters

3. Despite the title, Drawing 10 shows neither the existing nor proposed elevations, but rather the building prior to recent permitted extensions. The building as it appeared at the site visit is consistent with the 'existing' floor plans 1916/P/10 and 19/16/P/20, and I have therefore assessed the application on this basis. The issues under consideration are the provision of outdoor space and the suitability of the conversion, so the lack of information regarding 'proposed' elevations does not have a bearing on my decision.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. Policy SC5 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan (2015- 2030) requires that a minimum of 5 m² of private outdoor space be provided to secure satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers of flats. This can be in combination with communal space to achieve a minimum of 25 m² overall. Regardless of the configuration of rooms and exact number of occupants, in providing no private or communal outdoor space for the first floor flat the

proposal would fail to provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers in this respect.

5. I have noted that there are parks and open spaces nearby. Whilst this is beneficial, it does not outweigh the essential requirement that all occupants have access to some private outdoor amenity space, especially in a suburban area.
6. For these reasons the proposal conflicts with Policy SC5 of the Local Plan, which seeks to provide satisfactory living conditions.

Suitability for conversion

7. Policy SC6 of the Local Plan requires that at least one family-sized unit is provided at ground floor level in any residential conversion, where this is defined as a minimum of two bedrooms for four people. The ground floor flat would not meet the minimum space standards for two double bedrooms and is therefore not large enough to qualify as family-sized accommodation. The development would therefore result in the loss of a family-sized unit, in conflict with this policy.
8. Policy SC6 is also clear that for a building to be suitable for conversion the net original internal floor area must be at least 130 m². The Council has calculated that the original floor area of this property was 90 m² and therefore substantially below this threshold. In addition to reflecting the internal space requirements for new development, the policy seeks to avoid the harm to amenity and character of a residential area that can result from creating accommodation for multiple occupation from smaller houses.
9. As neither flat would be a family-sized unit, and in being two households rather than one, the building would be likely to be more intensively used than the existing single dwelling and consequently likely to give rise to increased activity, noise and disruption to neighbours.
10. I have taken into consideration that there are several blocks of flats nearby, which contribute to a local character of more intensive use than housing alone. However, in being purpose built and providing communal gardens, the nature of the existing flats is significantly different to conversion of a house, which the Council states is not common in the immediate vicinity.
11. For the above reasons the proposed conversion conflicts with Policy SC6 of the Local Plan, which seeks to retain family accommodation, and protect the character of an area and the amenity of residents.

Other matters

12. The proposal would create two flats from a single house, but the benefit to local housing supply would be limited by the loss of a family-sized dwelling.
13. I have noted reference by the appellant to a new, draft Housing Strategy and the aspiration therein to provide a choice of high-quality housing. This proposal may widen the variety of housing in the area, but I have not been provided with evidence of the relative demands for housing types locally to assess the need for non-family-sized dwellings.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR