
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2020

by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/20/3254562

Jefferson Place, 1 Fernie Street, Manchester M4 4AZ

- 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 A Henry of Broompark Management against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 125840/FU/2020, dated 17 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is change of use of unused store room in a studio apartment.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of future occupants with regard to levels of light and the size of the unit.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a store-room and corridor that is situated on the first floor of Jefferson Place which is a large residential block with parking beneath. It is located close to Manchester City Centre surrounded by a range of other commercial and residential uses, many of which are within large buildings.
4. The proposal would create a residential unit of around 18sqm. It would include the replacement of an existing louvre with a window of a size to match the existing windows used elsewhere on the building.
5. This window would be the only window to the property. It would face in a north-westerly direction, would sit beneath a balcony of the property above and would be recessed behind the protruding stairwell of the building. It would partially look onto the blank elevation of the large building that is situated on the opposite side of the road. Taking all these aspects into account, combined with the size of the window, I consider that it would create a dark internal environment that would be hugely reliant on artificial means of lighting and would not provide acceptable levels of natural daylight.
6. The Manchester Residential Quality Guidance outlines that for a one-bedroom, one-person unit, where, like in the appeal proposal, there is a shower room

instead of a bathroom, a minimum floor area of 37sqm should be provided. Although this document does not have the same weight as the adopted development plan, it is consistent with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that developments should create high standards of amenity for future users. The guidance is therefore a material consideration to which I attach moderate weight.

7. The floor area of the proposed development would create a self-contained residential unit of around 18sqm, less than half the minimum area as outlined in the guidance. I consider that although the layout shows space for a bed, kitchen facilities and a shower room, it is significantly lacking in notable space for sitting, eating, watching television or providing space for storage of clothes and other household items. The amount of space is poor and indicative of the confined and substandard nature of the accommodation. Consequently, the internal space of the dwelling is deficient, leading to a cramped and claustrophobic environment to the detriment of the living conditions of the future occupiers.
8. The appellant has referred to similar size units at purpose-built student accommodation. In the examples given, the units in the Church Inn development appear to have larger windows and a communal lounge/sitting area is provided. In the Chancellors Hotel development, these appear to be bedrooms with communal kitchens rather than self-contained units. I do not find these examples directly comparable to the appeal proposal which I have, in any event, determined on its own individual planning merits.
9. The proposal would therefore provide unacceptable living conditions for future occupants with regard to levels of light and the size of the unit. It would be contrary to Policies SP1, H3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved Policy DC5 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), the Residential Quality Guide and the Framework. Collectively, these policies and guidance require, amongst other things, that development creates high standards of amenity and be of an appropriate size and provide appropriate levels of light.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has commented and submitted evidence regarding the benefit of the proposal in relation to the provision of an additional housing unit to cater for a specific demand, in a highly sustainable location. I accept that these are benefits of the proposal, however they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified or justify allowing substandard residential accommodation.

Conclusion

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

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR