



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2020 by Alex O'Doherty LLB(Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/20/3247351

161 Wordsworth Way, West Drayton UB7 9HX

- 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 Mark Jones against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 75126/APP/2019/3218, dated 30 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as, "Conversion of a single dwelling into 2no. self-contained residential units."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants, with regard to the provision of internal space.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal property is a two-storey maisonette situated within a block of flats. The proposal relates to the conversion of the maisonette into 2 self-contained studio flats. No external changes are proposed. The principal dispute between the parties relates to the ground floor unit, which the Council considers would fall short of the internal space standards specified in Policy DMHB 16 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) ('Local Plan'). The Council has calculated the shortfall as approximately 3 sq m, and this figure has not been disputed by the appellant.
5. All the proposed rooms on the ground floor would be very small. In particular, the living and dining area would offer very limited space for furniture required for everyday use, such as a bed and a table, meaning that any space left for relaxing and entertaining would likely be very minimal. Thus, the proposal would result in a cramped layout which would be very uncomfortable to use. Accordingly, I consider that the shortfall in internal space would cause material harm to the living conditions of the future occupants. The supporting text to

Policy DMHB 16 refers to all new housing serving the practical and social needs of occupiers, and the proposal conflicts with this aspiration.

6. It is noted that currently the two flats share similarities in visual terms, but the proposed layout for both flats, and the usage of each floor, would be quite different to that which exists. Similarly, whilst there might not be any increase in the number of occupants, the type of use would be materially different. For this reason, the existing living conditions and floor area are not directly comparable. The appellant has highlighted that the stairs are the primary reason for the ground floor flat being smaller than the first floor flat. However, the gross floor area must be considered in the context of its use as a new independent dwelling unit, and in this regard the shortfall relates to useable space, not 'dead' space, such as a corridor.
7. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would provide unacceptable living conditions for future occupants, with regard to the provision of internal space. The proposal would conflict with Policy DMHB 16 of the Local Plan, which provides that all housing development should have an adequate provision of internal space in order to provide an appropriate living environment. The proposal also conflicts with Policy 3.5 and Table 3.3 of the London Plan (2016), the Housing Standards Minor Alterations to The London Plan (March 2016), the Mayor of London's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance - Housing (March 2016), and the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard (March 2015), which have similar aims.

Other Matters

8. It is not in dispute that the proposal would provide acceptable levels of outlook, daylight, privacy, and outdoor amenity space for future occupants, and that no harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed use would be appropriate in this residential area and would not generate additional parking pressures. Also, no concerns have been raised in relation to accessibility requirements for the ground floor flat. However, these are neutral factors, which do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
9. The proposal would make a small contribution to the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and would contribute to the mix of housing in the local area. Consequently, the proposal would offer a marginally more efficient use of the building. However, it would do so in a manner that would harm the living conditions of future occupants, and therefore I find that the matters advanced in support of the proposal, do not, either individually or collectively, outweigh the harm identified, nor the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex O'Doherty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR