



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 07 November 2020

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/20/3250890

1-21 Mapperley Close, Wanstead, London E11 2SF

- 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 Long Acre Securities Limited against the decision of London Borough of Redbridge
 - The application Ref 4307/19, dated 06 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 03 January 2020
 - The development proposed is addition of a fourth storey to provide 4 x 1 and 2 x 2 bedroom flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development was amended following submission of the application to "*Fourth floor extension to provide six self-contained flats (4x1 bedroom and 2x2 bedroom) with associated car/ cycle parking, refuse and amenity space. (summary)*". I have made use of the original description of development for the purposes of this appeal.
3. Amended plans were submitted with this appeal. This amendment would not alter the scheme significantly, as the description of development and external appearance would remain the same; the proposed changes are mostly internal or minor balcony changes. All relevant parties had the opportunity to comment on the original application and on the amended plans as part of the appeal process¹. I therefore find considering the amended plans for this appeal would not prejudice the interests of any parties.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - (a) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, including it would conserve or enhance the significance of a nearby heritage asset; and,
 - (b) Whether the proposal would provide an adequate standard of living conditions for future occupiers of the proposed development and existing occupiers of the host building.

¹ *Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE & Harborough DC* [1982] JPL 37

Reasons

Character of the area

5. The appeal site is a three-storey block of flats (the 'host building'). Its facing materials are render and dark timber, its fenestration consists of regularly spaced large windows and it has a flat roof with a tile-hung mansard-style parapet to the front elevation. The site is located on Mapperley Close, which is a service road for the block of flats accessed off the A113 New Wanstead Road. The block of flats fronts New Wanstead Road and due to its overall scale, relatively limited set-back from the road and open frontage, it is prominent within the street scene.
6. New Wanstead Road has a mixed character due to a broad variety of building types, scales and designs, including varied roof types. There are several large blocks of flats along the road. The buildings on either side of the host building are blocks of a similar height to the existing host building (a large three-storey block and a relatively small four-storey block). The blocks benefit either from a single coherent design with the fourth storey as a continuation of the building rather than appearing as an addition, or benefit from well-articulated design which creates the appearance of a subordinate fourth storey.
7. The proposal would introduce a fourth storey onto the host building with only a small increase in overall height, in line with surrounding development and in keeping with local scale, given the prevalence of four-storey blocks of flats in the area. Moreover, the proposed fourth storey would add little actual height to the host building above the height of the existing parapet.
8. However, the proposed fourth storey would be of a significant scale in proportion to the host building and would have little inset from the plane of any elevation; appearing massive and dominant. Moreover, its windows would be of a different style, scale and alignment which, though achieving an imperfect vertical alignment on the front elevation, would appear incongruous with the style of the host building. This would highlight the large addition, rather than effectively articulate it. The combination of scale, set-back and fenestration would result in a bulky, unbalanced, appearance which would dominate the host building and would be a prominent incongruous feature in the street scene.
9. Despite filtered intervisibility by virtue of trees and the width of the road, the area immediately surrounding the appeal site forms part of the setting of 56 New Wanstead Road, a Grade II listed building. The proposal would fail to conserve or enhance that setting and would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the heritage asset. Given that the significance of the listed building mostly derives from its architectural features and its own plot rather than the mixed character of its setting, the proposal would result in a minimal amount of less than significant harm to the heritage asset.
10. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character of the host building and the surrounding area, and would fail to conserve the setting of a listed building resulting in less than substantial harm to the asset, contrary to policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan (RLP), adopted in 2018, and policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (LP), as well as the guidance within the Framework. These policies seek, amongst other things,

high quality design which respects the local character of the area and which conserves and enhances the significance of the historic environment.

Living Conditions

11. Several of the proposed units failed to provide sufficient Gross Internal Areas (GIA) or sufficient outdoor space due to the small size of the balconies. As such, they did not comply with the Nationally Designated Space Standards (NDSS) in accordance with the Development Plan. However, the amended plans provide additional balcony space and reduce bedroom sizes of some units to ensure they would be three person units rather than four person units; thereby ensuring the adequate provision of space which complies with the relevant minimum standards.
12. Existing occupants of the host building have expressed concern regarding disturbance during the construction phase of the development. Whilst there is significant potential for noise, disturbance and disruption during the construction phase of the development due to its proximity with existing flats, such impacts could be carefully managed by way of a construction management condition.
13. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would provide an adequate standard of living conditions for future occupiers of the proposed development and for the existing occupiers of the host building.

Other Matters

14. Third parties have expressed concerns relating to refuse storage. I noted during my visit that the existing provision for storage of refuse bins potentially interferes with the manoeuvring of vehicles within Mapperley Close. However, the proposal includes provisions to facilitate storage of the required number of bins. Such provision could be secured by imposition of a condition and as such, the proposal would comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan in this regard.
15. Representations have also been made in respect of parking provision within the site. Parking provision would not be increased by the proposal however, the site is well-located for access to public transport and would include increased provision for secure cycle storage on site. The proposal would therefore meet the requirements for parking and cycle storage of the relevant Development Plan policies, which seek a modal shift towards sustainable modes of travel.

Conclusion and planning balance

16. For the reasons stated above, I find that the appeal proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area.
17. The proposal would also fail to conserve or enhance the setting of a nearby listed building, resulting in a small degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, to which I afford great weight. The proposal would result in public benefits arising from the additional provision of residential accommodation. However, I am not convinced that such benefits could not be achieved without resulting in harm to the heritage asset and as such, the public benefits of the scheme do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh that harm.

18. The scheme would therefore conflict with policies LP26 of the RLP and policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the LP, as well as the guidance in the Framework. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR