The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2020

by T J Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/20/3255222
60 Woodlands Road, Ilford IG1 1JN

- 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 Ikram Wahid (Woodlands Lodge) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
- The application Ref 0566/20, dated 17 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 April 2020.
- The development proposed is Change of use from Commercial Hotel C1 Use to 6 Bedroom HMO C4 Use.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the proposal has been altered from the application form to the decision notice. However, the original description adequately describes the proposal and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

3. No applicant name was provided on the application form; however, this has been provided on the appeal form.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

   i. the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of surrounding residents with regard to noise, traffic and general activity;

   ii. the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of prospective occupants with regard to the size of shared communal facilities; and

   iii. whether the proposal makes adequate provision for secure, sheltered cycle parking facilities.

Reasons

5. Despite the evidence indicating that the neighbouring properties are guest houses, Woodlands Road has a prevailing residential character formed of terraced properties. Being set away and separate from the much busier centre of Ilford, the street has a quiet character, supporting only modest levels of activity and vehicular traffic.

Living conditions of surrounding residents

6. The building is a large double fronted terraced property. The existing and proposed floor plans are largely the same. Although the proposal is intended to provide for 6 people, many of the 6 bedrooms would be sufficiently large to accommodate a double bed. Further, there would be four storage areas. The two internal areas are additional rooms which are independently accessible from communal areas and served by their own window. The external rooms are located separately to the rear. Again, these are accessed independently and appear to be served by their own shower and toilet room.

7. The plans therefore suggest the potential for a significantly increased number of residents above 6. If this situation were to arise, the likely large numbers of comings and goings arising from a large group of unconnected occupiers would be likely to lead to increased noise, traffic and general activity in a residential street in what I observed to be a quiet and suburban residential area. Such increases would serve to detract from the surrounding resident's enjoyment of their homes.

Living conditions of future occupants

8. SPD[1] guidance contains space standards for HMO's. However, the floorspace that would be provided within the kitchen individually and when combined with other living areas would be under the advised provision on both counts in relation to six people. Therefore, the proposal would provide accommodation of substandard floorspace in relation to these areas, which would result in cramped accommodation for future occupiers. While this is guidance and relates to licensing purposes, its aim is to protect the living conditions of future occupiers and as a result of its inclusion within the SPD I have afforded it weight.

9. I therefore conclude on these issues that the development would be contrary to Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) (RLP) and SPD guidance, which amongst other things seek development which does not result in an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in relation to noise and which seek development which provides high standards of accommodation for housing in terms of size and arrangement of internal space.

10. There is disagreement between the parties as to the lawful use of the property, however there is nothing within the evidence to confirm that this is anything other than a residential dwelling. Policies LP2 and LP6 of the RLP seek to protect existing housing stock and retain an appropriate housing mix, but neither policy places restriction on changes of use to C4 Houses in Multiple occupation. SPD guidance recognises the importance of small HMOs as a source of housing supply that meet a particular housing need.

11. However, the evidence suggests that a greater number of residents could occupy the premises. Mindful of guarding against detrimental effects on the amenity of an area amongst other things, Policy LP6 sates that the Council will only support larger houses in multiple occupation where amongst other criteria no significant loss of amenity would occur to the area as a result of increased traffic, noise and/or general disturbance and where the property is located within a metropolitan, district or local centre (which this appeal property is

[1] Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Adopted September 2019

not). The proposal would therefore fail to accord with Policy LP6 of the RLP. I have not identified conflict with Policy LP2 which relates to delivering housing growth.

Cycle parking

12. No provision appears to have been made for secure, sheltered cycle parking facilities in support of sustainable transport modes which are required by Policy 6.9 of the London Plan (2016) (LP) and Policies LP22 and LP23 of the RLP.

13. However, given that there is external space to the front and rear of the property no evidence before me suggests that it would not be possible to accommodate appropriate cycle storage within the site of the appeal proposal. If I were minded to allow the appeal this could be a matter that could be appropriately addressed through a condition. Therefore, the appeal proposal would not conflict with Policy 6.9 of the LP nor Policies LP22 or LP23 of the RLP.

Other Matters

14. There is concern that the proposal would adversely affect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation (SAC), the site being within 6.2km of this feature. However, there is no need to consider the implications upon the SAC further as the scheme is unacceptable for other reasons.

Conclusion

15. Taking all relevant matters into account, the appeal should be dismissed.

T J Burnham

INSPECTOR