



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2021

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3261880

1 - 72 Manor Vale, Brentford TW8 9JP

- 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 Manor Vale Lodge Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00133/AW/P9, dated 28 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is 1 studio flat created by the conversion of existing roof-space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposed accommodation would provide a satisfactory living environment.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to one of these 3-4 storey blocks which have recently been extended by the provision of accommodation in the roof-space. As a result of the recent additions, there are 79 flats in total. The appeal relates to one end of Block A identified on the plans, closest to Boston Manor Road.
4. The proposed flat would be formed by the conversion of some of the roof-space and the creation of 2 new dormer windows. The submitted plans and those additional plans submitted with the appeal, indicate that parts of the proposed flat would have sloping ceilings and the remainder would have a maximum ceiling height of 2.3m.
5. The Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) indicate that the minimum floor area for such a flat should be 39sqm and the proposed flat would be 43sqm. In addition, the NDSS requires that at least 75% of floorspace should have a ceiling height of over 2.3m. The Council states that a 2.3m minimum ceiling height would only be achieved over 31.9sqm, which is 74%. The appellant indicates that the total floor area with a ceiling height at 2.3m or over would be 32sqm and goes on to state that this meets the requirement. For a flat of 43sqm, it would need to have at least 32.25sqm of its floorspace with a ceiling height of at least 2.3m. Therefore, by both methods of calculation, the proposal would fail to meet this aspect of the NDSS.

6. The London Plan 2016 Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) includes Standards 24 and 31. They require compliance with the NDSS as a minimum and also strongly encourage ceiling heights of 2.5m minimum for 75% of the floorspace of a dwelling. In addition, Standard 25 requires that the plans of proposed dwellings should demonstrate that they can suitably accommodate the furniture and functions required by future residents.
7. The appellant has submitted an indicative layout for the proposed flat and has supplemented this with appeal documents which include a section of the flat and some dimensions and ceiling heights. The indicative layout shows a logical location for a bed, but this is against a wall shown to be around 1.2m in height. The dining area is also shown within an area of restricted height; in some areas at 1.5m and below.
8. Whilst the shortfall in the provision of 75% of the floorspace with a ceiling height at a minimum of 2.3m may be seen as marginal, that standard is a minimum. This should be seen in combination with the failure to satisfy the London Plan SPG 'strong encouragement' to provide 2.5m heights. Furthermore, in seeming to place reliance on very low areas within the proposed unit in order to try to achieve a satisfactory layout and provision for furniture, the inadequacies of the proposed unit are exacerbated.
9. In my judgement and for these reasons, the proposal would fail to provide a satisfactory standard of living accommodation. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the Council's Local Plan Policies CC2 and SC5 and London Plan Housing SPG. As a consequence, the appeal is dismissed.

S T Wood

INSPECTOR