



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2021

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/20/3261632

454A Lodge Avenue, Dagenham, London, RM9 4QS

- 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 Lowfield Developments Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
 - The application Ref 20/01594/FULL, dated 3 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of existing maisonette to provide two self-contained flats including conversion of loftspace, one no. 1-bed 2 person, one no. 3-bed 4 person.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of existing maisonette to provide two self-contained flats including conversion of loftspace, one no. 1-bed 2 person, one no. 3-bed 4 person at 454A Lodge Avenue, Dagenham, London, RM9 4QS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/01594/FULL, dated 3 August 2020, subject to the following conditions:-
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 20202/05 Rev A; 20202/04 Rev A.

Reasons

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the supply of family-sized dwellings in the Borough. The development plan includes policies CM1 and CM2 in the Council's Core Strategy (2010) which seek to ensure that development meets community needs and maximises density taking into account local need. More specifically, policy BC4 in the Council's Borough Wide Development Plan Policies DPD (2011) seeks to resist proposals which involve the loss of housing with three bedrooms or more. Development plan policies in the London Plan 2021 (which has replaced the London Plan 2016) together aim to deliver the homes that London needs (GG4) by seeking to ensure that existing housing is replaced by higher densities with equivalent floorspace (H8), the efficient use of the housing stock to reduce vacant or under-used dwellings (H9) and refer to the need for additional family housing and to reduce pressure on the subdivision or conversion of properties (H10). Those policies have replaced those in the Intend to Publish London Plan referred to in the Council's decision but their provisions are essentially

unchanged. These are evidenced policies which are supported by national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to not only make efficient use of land but to ensure that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community is reflected in policies. I have given little weight to the policies in the Council's Draft Local Plan given its emerging status.

3. The appeal property comprises a maisonette at first and second floor levels above a retail unit in a parade of shops and commercial uses within a residential area close to facilities and services. It has been vacant for several years. Although the Council says it has six bedrooms, the plans for the existing layout show a kitchen, a bathroom and six other rooms. As one of those rooms is located off the kitchen, it is unlikely that it would be used as a bedroom and is more likely to be used as a living room. Of the remaining rooms, three are of a good size but two are very small and are below the floorspace standards required in the government's 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' and would not provide a good standard of accommodation. As such, the existing accommodation can only be considered as a three bedroom unit.
4. The proposed development comprises a one bedroom flat at first floor level and a three bedroom flat at second floor level and in a loft conversion within the existing roof space. The plans also show provision for cycle storage and refuse facilities in the garden to the rear of the property. The Council has assessed the proposal against the 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' and considers that it would provide an adequate quality of accommodation and a good standard of living. It also considers that it is acceptable in terms of accessibility to external amenity space.
5. The proposal would create additional floorspace and would increase the overall amount of accommodation. This would maximise the density of the site, which together with the inclusion of a three bedroom flat suitable in terms of space, layout and quality for a family, leads me to find that the proposal is acceptable.
6. The Council has not suggested any conditions should the appeal be allowed and none are mentioned in its officer's report other than the Environmental Protection Officer's suggestion for a scheme of acoustic protection prior to the commencement of façade construction. However, as no façade construction is proposed there is no opportunity for such a scheme and it is not therefore relevant to the development to be permitted. Moreover, although the flats would face a busy main road, they are set back behind a service road and parking bays and I have insufficient evidence before me to conclude that it is necessary in this location. However, a standard commencement condition is necessary as is a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, in order to provide certainty.

Conclusion

7. For the reasons stated above, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the supply of family-sized dwellings in the Borough and would accord with the development plan and the Framework. The appeal should be allowed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector