
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2021

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/20/3261395

72 Howerd Way, Woolwich, London SE18 4PZ

- 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 Mrs Chanchal Chaudhary against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/1550/HD, dated 16 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as '*Garage Conversion*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of garage into habitable room including replacement of garage door with windowed wall at 72 Howerd Way, Woolwich, London SE18 4PZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/1550/HD, dated 16 May 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: Site Location Plan and Drg Nos 01, 02, 03 and 04.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the development given in my formal decision reflects the description that was given by the Council on their decision notice and which was repeated by the appellant on the appeal form. This better reflects the entirety of the proposed works compared with the description that was given on the application form and used in the banner heading above. In addition, I have also used the full address that was given on the decision notice rather than the short version on the application form.

3. Since the date of the decision The London Plan 2021 (LP 2021) was published on 1 March 2021 and is now part of the development plan. The Council's decision notice referred to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of The London Plan 2016 (LP 2016), which are now superseded. The main parties for the appeal were invited to express their views on the LP 2021 insofar as it relates to the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a three-storey, terraced town house with an integral garage. It is part of a row of similar properties located at the end of two converging cul-de-sacs and which overlook an area of public open space that is set at a significantly lower level. The appeal property is part of a much larger residential development that comprises a mix of property types.
6. I saw during my visit that the estate is comprised by many buildings of repeat design and I am mindful that the original planning permission withdrew permitted development rights for alterations to the buildings. Notwithstanding, there are several examples in the area of properties that have converted their garages into living accommodation, having replaced the original garage door with a walled window. Two such examples are seen on the immediate approaches to the appeal property at Nos 8 and 30 Barlow Drive. At the time of my visit a third property closer to the appeal site, at 25 Barlow Drive was in the process of having a similar conversion undertaken. From the evidence before me I can only be certain that the works at No 8 have the benefit of a planning permission although there is no indication from the Council that any other cases are unlawful. Moreover, none of the changes appeared to me as either incongruous or out of keeping with the rhythm or character of the area. Instead, they struck me as being carefully considered alterations that had allowed the properties to be adapted at ground floor level without causing any harm to the street scene.
7. The appeal proposal would simply follow suit. The modification to the property would be at ground floor level and consistent with other examples. It would merely add to the existing mix with no harmful impact on the overall character or appearance of the appeal property, the terrace, or the wider area. As such, I find no conflict with Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies July 2014 (the Local Plan), which requires high quality design in all developments or with the similar aims and objectives expressed within the Council's *Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (2016)*. Neither would it conflict with LP 2021 Policy D3, which has been drawn to my attention by the Council since the appeal was made as a relevant replacement for LP 2016 Policies 7.4 and 7.6. This requires development proposals to respond positively to local distinctiveness through, amongst other things, appearance. The Council's decision notice also refers to Local Plan Policy DH(a) but this relates to residential extensions and is not relevant to this appeal.
8. The Council has drawn my attention to a similar proposal at 34 Princess Alice Way that was dismissed on appeal (Ref APP/E5330/D/18/3198119). However,

there is no information to show how that property relates to Howerd Way or its surroundings. In any event, the Inspector in that case found that the proposal would unacceptably erode the uniformity of design for that particular terrace. That conclusion does not reflect my findings at the appeal site.

Conditions

9. A condition specifying the relevant plans is necessary as this provides certainty. In the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to control the external materials to be used.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, and in the absence of any other conflict with the development plan, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR