
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2021

by T J Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/D/21/3270931

51 Lockesfield Place, London E14 3AJ

- 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 Rakesh Patel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/21/00004, dated 23 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion and the installation of 2no. velux windows and 1no. window at loft level.
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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. That on the application form adequately describes the proposals and I have determined the appeal on that basis although I have omitted the superfluous wording within the description.
3. The London Plan (2021) was adopted after the Council issued its decision notice. Both parties have been afforded the opportunity to comment on its implications for this proposal. I must determine the appeal based on the policies in place at the time of my decision.

Main Issues

4. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the proposed opening on the north facing elevation. The second is whether the proposal would result in the loss of a family home.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal property is set within Lockesfield Place. Despite not falling within a Conservation Area or being listed or locally listed and being a reasonably modern development, the development is attractive, very well maintained and retains a remarkably cohesive appearance.
6. This is partly achieved through the use of repeated design features, materials and colour finishing throughout which contribute positively to the character and

appearance of the area. One such repeated feature is the use of shadow windows on gable ends, which are common throughout the development and contribute to its charm.

7. The shadow windows are visible at No's 67 and 68 Lockesfield Place, across the courtyard from the appeal site, as well as elsewhere within the development. The introduction of a UPVC double glazed sash window would be at odds with the prevailing detailing. As such, I conclude on this issue that the window would form an alien and discordant addition that would detract from the character and appearance of the area.
8. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with Policy S.DH1 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (2020) (THLP) which in seeking high quality design requires that amongst other things developments must ensure the architectural language including design of detailing complements and enhances the immediate and wider surroundings.

Family home

9. The evidence indicates that the property is currently used as an HMO with one occupant within each of the 5 bedrooms. In utilising the roof-space, the new bedroom would also span across the roof-space above the adjoining property at No.73 Lockesfield Place, also in HMO use.
10. This would lead to a somewhat closer arrangement between the two properties than currently exists. However, there would be nothing unusual in the bedroom of one property being partly placed above another, which would be a common arrangement in flatted development, including where flats are occupied by families.
11. There is nothing within the evidence which persuades me that this arrangement would make the future sale of the properties for family accommodation much less attractive, indeed the availability of an additional bedroom within the property could equally be seen as a positive.
12. There would therefore be no conflict with Policy S.H1 of the THLP which amongst other things seeks to ensure that development does not undermine the supply of self-contained housing – in particular family homes. It also seeks to resist development that would result in a net loss of family units.

Other Matters

13. I accept that there are examples of extensions and alterations within Lockesfield Place, some of which are publicly visible, and I note the first-floor conservatory extension that has been added to No. 44. However, that development cannot be compared directly to the proposal before me and alterations that have high levels of public visibility from within the development appear to be minimal.
14. I also note that loft level windows are incorporated within properties towards the front of the Lockesfield Place development. However, these features are possibly original and, in any event, are repeated throughout this part of the development such that they are consistent features. These other features do not therefore provide justification for the appeal.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would provide some additional residential floorspace and would make efficient use of the existing building. However, I have afforded greater weight to the harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the area.
16. There are no material considerations that indicate the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

T J Burnham

INSPECTOR