



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2021

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/21/3273771

142 Ilford Lane, Ilford IG1 2LG

- 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 Central Ilford Hotel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 3966/20, dated 18 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing two storey rear back addition and two storey rear detached structure, construction of four storey rear extension to existing main building including change of use of premises to hotel use. The proposal would provide 22 bedrooms with en suites, including two wheelchair accessible rooms, reception area and breakfast/coffee lounge at ground floor level with main entrance off Ilford Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In March 2021, after the Council made its decision, the new London Plan was adopted. As a consequence, Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the former London Plan (2016) referred to in the decision notice are now superseded. I have not therefore had further regard to them in my decision. The parties had the opportunity to comment on the new London Plan during the appeal and I took the comments made, and the policies referenced, into account in my decision.
3. Since the appeal was submitted the Government has published a new National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The parties have had the opportunity to provide comments on the revisions therein and I have therefore had regard to the new Framework without prejudice to the parties.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. 142 Ilford Lane is a mainly commercial premises with modest accommodation at its rear, at the corner of Ilford Lane and Howard Road. Howard Road slopes quite steeply down away from its junction with Ilford Road and is a typical mid-urban street of two-storey Victorian terraced properties. The buildings within the site step down sympathetically towards the adjacent terrace and are formed in attractive Victorian brickwork. Under Ref APP/W5780/W/17/3185999 the site has permission for change of use to a 15 bedroom hotel with a first-floor rear extension, works associated with which have lawfully commenced.

6. The extension proposed would be a very large structure which would extend in unbroken form across the Howard Road frontage from near the highest point of No 142 all the way to its rear boundary. As a result, it would tower formidably above the highway and the nearest dwelling, 2 Howard Road. Its considerable form would have little visual appeal or variety, giving the impression of a structure oversized for its environs. Its homogenous presence would not be softened by its mansard roof or the large-scale use of facing brick.
7. Whilst Claire House, on the opposite corner of Ilford Lane and Howard Road, is also large, it has a varied appearance and steps down more respectfully to the terracing on that side of the street. The appellant has also referred to two other corner sites aside similar terraced streets off Ilford Lane. 210 Ilford Lane steps back at height from the adjacent terrace, offering some relief, and 255-257 Ilford lane are well separated from the nearest housing along Henley Road. In any event, the topography at these sites is far flatter, thus avoiding the pronounced visual dominance that would occur at the appeal site.
8. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the design aims of Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030 (adopted 2018), Policy D3 of the London Plan and the Framework.

Other Considerations

9. I recognise that Ilford is a destination for regeneration, as reflected in the Ilford Manifesto. I also accept the appellant's contention that new hotels are logically part of that regeneration process, and that the London Plan envisages new hotels to be sited in well-connected areas, such as at Ilford. However, it seems to me that to deliver appropriate hotel accommodation which would have a regenerative effect, schemes should respond well to their context, which would not be the case here. I am also mindful that there is already commenced permission for hotel development at 142 Ilford Lane, albeit to a smaller scale, which would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme as a well-connected hotel use are of limited weight in my assessment.

Planning Balance

10. I have been referred to the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within Paragraph 11 of the Framework. However, there is no evidence that the policies which are most important for determining this appeal are out of date. As such, I do not consider that Paragraph 11d) is engaged.
11. The harm to the character and appearance of the area brings the scheme into conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no other considerations, including the Framework and the aforementioned benefits of the hotel provision, which outweigh this conflict. Any absence of harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents is neutral in the balance.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons outlined above, and taking all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones
INSPECTOR