



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 November 2021

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/W/21/3274439

3 Church Hill, Southgate, N21 1LS

- 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 Messrs Archer and Gradica against the decision of London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 20/03062/FUL, dated 22 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as conversion of single family dwelling house into 3 self-contained flats involving single storey rear extension, part first floor side extension, part second floor side extension together with conversion of garage with alterations to front elevation with associated bin storage and cycle parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my visit some of the proposed works had already been carried out, including the first-floor side extension. I have determined the appeal on this basis.
3. The new London Plan was adopted in March 2021. It forms part of the development plan for the borough. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the new London Plan in their appeal submissions.
4. I have omitted the reference to a balcony to the first floor side extension from the description of development as this is not a feature shown on the proposed plans.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - Whether the development would accord with relevant local policies regarding the supply of family housing,
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area
 - The effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, in particular those at 1 Church Hill; and,
 - Whether it would make provision for sustainable drainage measures to offset the increase in impermeable surfacing at the site.

Reasons

Family housing

6. Policy DMD5 of the Council's Development Management Document 2014 (the DMD) provides criteria for the assessment of the conversion of existing units into self-contained flats. Among these criteria is a requirement that only 1 out of a consecutive row of 5 units may be converted. The supporting text for the policy states that the uncontrolled intensification of residential uses can lead to unacceptable change in the character of established residential areas and impact on residential amenity. Policy DMD37 of the DMD further seeks that development be appropriate to its context.
7. The appeal property is a semi-detached house in a row of four similar properties at 1, 3, 5 and 7 Church Hill between the roundabout junction and a block of flats beyond No 7. Of these four properties, No 5 has previously been converted into flats.
8. My attention has been drawn to No 5 having been converted before 1948, and that only one other house in Church Hill has been converted to flats. While this may be the case, the intention of the policy is to prevent clustering of converted properties in close proximity, regardless of the age of any prior conversion or lack of conversions in the wider street.
9. The appeal proposal would lead to an unacceptable intensification of the number of converted units in this row of properties, and therefore it would fail to accord with relevant local policies regarding the supply of family housing.

Character and appearance

10. The single-storey rear extension would be built off a previously approved extension to the original house. The combined depth of the extensions would be 6.5 metres from the rear wall, and the proposed extension would be wider than the existing extension. This would result in an incongruous appearance relative to the rest of the house with the extension failing to integrate well with the approved rear extension. Due to its width and flat roof and the significant depth that it would extend from the original house, the cumulative effect would be of a bulky and incongruous addition, out of keeping with the character of the property.
11. I note that each of the other three semi-detached properties in the row has a single-storey rear extension and that there is little consistency in their appearance. However, none of these are so wide as the proposed extension, nor were they built off larger extensions with which they failed to integrate.
12. My attention has been drawn to permitted development rights that allow a dwellinghouse to be extended by up to six metres to the rear. However, this only applies where the extension would be a single storey in height, and the existing extension is three storeys tall. This therefore carries very limited weight in the determination of this appeal.
13. The boundary between No 3 and No 5 is angled so that the first and second floor side extension is set off the boundary to its front, although at the rear it is built up to the side boundary. The extension is set back from the original front elevation of the house, but only by a relatively modest distance, and due to its width it substantially reduces the gap between Nos 3 and 5. That creates a

terracing effect between these two properties, and disrupts the symmetry of this group of four properties as none of the other houses in the group have been extended to the side above ground floor level.

14. I am aware of other semi-detached properties in Church Hill that have been extended in a way that unbalanced the pair, including the pair of houses immediately opposite the appeal site. In addition, my attention has been drawn to similarly unbalanced pairs in the wider area. However, this set of four houses form a distinct group in a prominent location at the entrance to Church Hill, and the side extension does cause harm to the appearance of the group.
15. The rear extension and side extension would both therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy CP30 of the Core Strategy 2010 (the CS) and Policies DMD6, DMD8, DMD11, DMD14 and DMD37 of the DMD. These policies require, amongst other criteria, that development be of an appropriate scale, bulk and massing, that rear extensions cause no adverse visual impact and that side extensions not result in a terracing effect.

Living conditions

16. No 1 Church Hill has a large ground floor window facing into its rear garden along the boundary with the appeal site. It also has an L-shaped rear extension of similar depth to the proposed that overlaps this window, although it is set off the shared boundary. Due to the combination of its proximity to the boundary and the cumulative depth from the original rear wall, the proposed rear extension to No 3 would cause a harmful loss of outlook from the rear of No 1 and would result in an overbearing impact to its occupiers.
17. No 1 benefits from direct natural light to the rear window throughout the morning. The proposed rear extension would be built up to the shared boundary between the properties, but as the roof would be pitched down towards the boundary, the effect on natural light to No 1 would be limited.
18. Nevertheless, the rear extension would result in harm overall to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 1. It would therefore conflict with Policy CP30 of the CS and Policies DMD8, DMD11 and DMD37 of the DMD. Taken together these policies require, amongst other criteria, that rear extensions cause no impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Sustainable drainage

19. A sustainable drainage strategy has been provided with the appeal. It shows that the development would increase the extent of impermeable surfacing at the site by around 30 square metres. Proposed mitigation measures include the use of water butts, permeable paving for all hard surfaces and incorporating green roofs to the rear extension and the converted garage. While this would not allow for the development to meet the Council's target attenuation for the site, it would significantly exceed the minimum attenuation required.
20. The proposed development would therefore make sufficient provision for sustainable drainage measures to offset the increase in impermeable surfacing at the site. It would accord with Policy CP21 of the CS and Policy DMD61 of the DMD. Collectively these require that appropriate sustainable drainage measures are incorporated within new developments, including at least one 'at source' measure.

Planning Balance

21. The development would result in the creation of two additional dwellings, supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The Council's target for delivery of housing over the next ten years has increased significantly in the new London Plan from that set in the prior revision. The appeal property has been vacant, and the development can be completed quickly as it relates to the conversion of a single house. The property is in a sustainable location with access to public transport nearby and is relatively close to shops and services. There is an identified need for two-bedroom and three-bedroom housing in the borough, although the development would result in the loss of a larger family home. The accommodation provided would comply with the Lifetime Homes standards. The works would be carried out by local tradespeople, delivering a benefit to the local economy.
22. Set against this, there would be harm from the conversion of a second property in this row of four to flats, as well as harm to the character and appearance of the area. Each of these attracts considerable weight in the overall balance. There would also be harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at No 1, which attracts moderate weight given that the harm would principally be to a single window that is already partially obscured by an extension to No 1.
23. While the benefits of the appeal proposal are recognised, given the scale of the development they only attract moderate weight in its favour. In this instance they would not outweigh the cumulative harm that would arise from the proposed development. There are therefore no material considerations to indicate that this appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR