



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2022

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10/06/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W2465/W/22/3290932

148 Victoria Park Road, Leicester LE2 1XD

- 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 and Mrs Singh against the decision of Leicester City Council.
 - The application Ref 20211586, dated 23 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is conversion of an existing residential property into 3 sub-divided flats with the installation of a dormer window to the rear roof section.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposal would conflict with the aims of national and local planning policy to create mixed and balanced communities, having regard to the current housing mix in the surrounding area and its effect on residential character.

Reasons

3. No 148 Victoria Park Road is a large two-storey detached house. It is situated within a row of similarly scaled large detached dwellings which include properties in single family ownership. Victoria Park sits opposite the site. Overall, these factors positively contribute towards the area's pleasant residential character.
4. CS Policy 6 (Housing Strategy) of the Leicester City Core Strategy (2014) (CS) sets out a range of measures to ensure that new housing meets the needs of the city's residents. The measures include amongst other things the delivery of sustainable communities to meet both the current and future needs of the population as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The policy also states that careful consideration will be given to conversions to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the character of the area or the maintenance of mixed communities. In particular, the policy confirms that the conversion of existing large houses will be resisted where it would still be appropriate for family use and meets an identified demand for this type of accommodation.
5. The host dwelling has five bedrooms and therefore falls squarely within the larger family housing (at least 4+ bedrooms) that CS Policy 6 indicates was identified as being required in the SHMA which informed the CS. There is no evidence before me to suggest that the house is no longer appropriate for

family use. Therefore, its conversion to three flats should be resisted in line with CS Policy 6 if it also currently meets an identified demand for this type of accommodation.

6. The Council suggests that the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2017) (HEDNA) recommends that 10 – 20% of Leicester's future housing stock should be for 4+ bedroomed dwellings. This has not been disputed by the appellant for example through the provision of more recent evidence to suggest that the identified demand is now different. I acknowledge that the information before me suggests that there is also a need in Leicester for two-bedroomed dwellings. However, this does not negate the need to meet the identified demand for larger family housing in the area.
7. In addition, the evidence before me indicates that the site is situated within an area where an Article 4 Direction is in place which prevents dwellings from being converted to Houses of Multiple Occupation for up to 6 residents. I accept that the appeal proposal is for flats and not a HMO. Even so, the existence of the Direction serves to demonstrate the Council's intention to carefully manage the housing mix and address any population imbalance in the area.
8. Furthermore, the Council suggests that there are a series of properties on Victoria Park Road in use as either HMOs or flats in close proximity to the size. In that regard, subdivision of the appeal dwelling would increase the concentration of higher density accommodation in this location.
9. Without any detailed evidence to demonstrate otherwise I am concerned that the proposal would unacceptably dilute the tenure mix in the area. A proliferation of higher density properties has the potential to be detrimental to the areas pleasant residential character and further persuades me that the proposal should be resisted.
10. For the foregoing reasons, the proposal would not positively contribute towards a mixed and balanced community and would dilute the areas pleasant residential character. Consequently, in this regard, the proposal would conflict with CS Policy 6 of the CS and the Framework.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR