



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 July 2022

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/22/3294556

156 Burrage Road, Plumstead, London SE18 7LD

- 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 Akintunde Akintilo against the decision of the Council for the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/3252/F, dated 6 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as the "construction of a two-storey side extension and conversion of property into 2 x 3-bed houses."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are:
 - the suitability of the living conditions for future occupiers, with particular reference to internal space; and
 - the effect on the supply of small-medium family housing.

Reasons

Future occupiers' living conditions

3. The appeal site is an end of terrace property located on a corner plot opposite Foxfield Primary School, at the junction of Burrage Road and Raglan Road. The area is mainly residential, made up of modest two-storey terraced houses with a mixture of traditional and more modern styles with the appeal site falling in the latter.
4. The appellant has stated that the proposed houses, which would include 2 x three-bedroom four-person units, would have internal floor areas of 77.5sq.m and 76sq.m respectively. The Government's nationally described space standard, March 2015 (NDSS) contains the minimum internal space requirements for new dwellings. A three-bedroom, four-person dwelling laid out over two storeys requires 84sq.m as the minimum standard. This requirement is also applied in a local context within Table 3.1 of The London Plan, adopted March 2021 (LP). Given that the floor areas of both houses would be significantly less than the 84sq.m required in either document, as the minimum floorspace for a dwelling of this nature, it would result in cramped, oppressive and unsuitable living conditions for future occupiers.

5. The Council raised further points with regard to the size of the main bedroom, and the lack of internal storage space. The NDSS and LP also set requirements that in order to provide two bedspaces, a bedroom must have a floor area of at least 11.5sq.m. From the plans before me, the main bedrooms would be below this standard. The NDSS and LP also requires three-bedroom, four-person dwellings to provide at least 2.5sq.m of built-in storage space, which also has not been included on the plans. Given that these figures are minimum standards which are intended to act as a benchmark for high design quality, the shortfall in floorspace is not appropriate, and the proposal conflicts with both the NDSS and the LP in this regard.
6. In relation to the main issue, the living conditions of future occupiers would be unsuitable due to inadequate internal space. As such, because the highest internal qualities of the housing would not be provided, the proposal would not comply with LP Policy D6. Furthermore, the development would not respond to Policy H5 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies, adopted July 2014 (GLP) which amongst other things, seeks to achieve high quality housing, and an integrated environment. The proposal would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) 2021, which amongst other things, seeks high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of buildings.

Family housing

7. GLP Policy H(b) states, amongst other things, the conversion of small and medium sized family dwellings with less than 130sq.m of net floor area where they form part of a terrace will not be permitted, in recognition of the need to retain medium sized terraced properties, of appropriate standards for family accommodation. It goes on to state that permission will be granted for the sub-division of residential property provided it meets other specific requirements including adequate noise insulation and car parking.
8. As part of the appeal, the floor area has been recalculated by the Council as 115.34sq.m, which is disputed by the appellant, who claims the floor area is 125.05sq.m. This figure is more akin to the 124sq.m figure originally stated in the Councils reason for refusal. Nevertheless, GLP Policy H(b)(i) is explicit in its requirements to protect family housing of less than 130sq.m from subdivision. None of these figures meet the required area. As such, the proposal would result in the loss of a small-medium family unit of accommodation, for which no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated, and thus conflicts with the Council's local plan. I have not been provided with evidence to indicate there is an adequate provision for this type of housing in the area.
9. In regard to this main issue, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the supply of family housing within the area in direct conflict with GLP Policy H(b)(i). The development would also be contrary to Policy H10 of the LP which, amongst other things, aims to provide a genuine choice of homes for different sizes and types of dwellings, with the provision of family housing as one of its priorities.

Other Matters

10. I have noted the appellant's position that the proposed accommodation would partially contribute to meeting the demand for this form of housing within the area. However, through its adopted plan policies the Council has presented a

similar case for the provision of family accommodation, and it is clear that the need for the latter is more pressing. The Framework has an objective of significantly boosting housing supply but also stresses the need to assess the size, type and tenure of housing for different groups in the community. As such the additional dwelling does not outweigh the harm in relation to the main issues.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR