



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2023

by K Allen MEng (Hons) MArch PGCert ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/22/3312547

74 Grierson Road, Crofton Park, Lewisham, London SE23 1PE

- 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 Prema Nazran against the decision of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/22/128132, dated 22 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension and flat conversion into two separate dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council have not raised any concerns regarding the single storey rear extension. Based on the evidence before me and having visited site, I see no reason to disagree.

Main Issue

3. Having regard to the above, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the Borough's supply of family housing.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an extended end terrace house located on a tree lined residential street. It is typical of the area, which predominantly comprises terraced houses. A busy railway line runs parallel to the moderate sized rear gardens with trains audible but not visible due to the intervening distances and mature planting.
5. The appeal property is a four-bedroom single family dwelling, with accommodation across three storeys, including the loft. The proposal would extend the ground floor accommodation, with the internal space subdivided into 2 flats. The ground floor would comprise a one-bedroom flat with a two-bedroom flat spread across the remaining floors.
6. Core Strategy Policy 1 of the Lewisham Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (June 2011) (LCS) seeks to ensure that new housing meets the needs of the existing and future population of the Borough, with the need for a mix of housing tenures and size.

7. Residential conversions of a single-family house to two or more dwellings are covered by Policy DM3 of the Lewisham Local Development Framework Development Management Local Plan (November 2014) (DMLP) and clearly state that the Council will resist proposals which involve the loss of housing with 3 or more bedrooms except where environmental conditions or lack of external amenity space mean the property is not suitable for family accommodation.
8. The proposal would result in the loss of a house with 3 or more bedrooms. While the property is in close proximity to a busy railway line, the levels of noise experienced at the appeal site are minimal and would not preclude family occupation. The appeal property benefits from a moderate sized garden, appropriate for family use. Therefore, the proposal would not meet the exception criteria in Policy DM3.
9. I acknowledge that Policy H1 of the London Plan (March 2021) (LP) requires the Borough to optimise the potential for housing delivery on all suitable and available sites, including through housing intensification. Policy H10 of the LP outlines the need to deliver mixed and inclusive neighbourhoods. The Lewisham Housing Delivery Test: Action Plan 2021 (August 2021) also highlights the need to boost the housing supply in Lewisham and the important contribution small sites can make. The proposal would contribute an additional dwelling to the local housing market, offering variety in size, type, and tenure of accommodation.
10. However, Policy GG4 of the LP recognises that the homes being delivered must provide for identified needs. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) likewise expects that policies on housing provision are informed by demographic information, with express reference made in paragraph 62 to families. Whilst the appellant contends that the proposed flats would be suitable for a variety of occupiers, including key workers, young professionals, small families, or single persons, I have no evidence before me to indicate an identified need for the type of accommodation proposed, within the area.
11. My attention has been drawn to another appeal case in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham¹ which dealt with the subdivision of a larger dwelling. However, there are fundamental differences to the appeal proposal, these include the location, the relevant development plan, and the occupation history of the property. As such, the context would differ significantly to that of the scheme before me, and so it does not lead me to a different view in this case.
12. Having reached the conclusion above, the proposal would materially harm the Borough's supply of family housing and undermine the Council's specific intention to retain housing of this type. The proposal would conflict with Policy GG4 of the London Plan (March 2021), Core Strategy Policy 1 of the LCS And Policy DM3 of the DMLP. Collectively these policies support the delivery of new housing to meet local need, promote and retain housing choice, while appropriately managing the conversion of single-family houses to flats.

¹ Appeal Reference APP/Z5060/A/11/2167184

Other Matters

13. The proposal would provide an additional high-quality dwelling in an accessible location. Whilst the Framework seeks to boost the supply of housing, the social and economic benefits of a single dwelling would be limited. Further, I have no substantive evidence to suggest that the subdivision of the host property would be a more efficient use of land or that the flats provided would be affordable. The proposal would have no significant adverse environmental impacts and would not materially affect the makeup of the community. However, these are neutral factors, which neither weigh in favour of, or against the proposal. Overall, these matters would not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

K Allen

INSPECTOR