



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2024

by Katie McDonald MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/24/3338357

25 Windsor Road, Hounslow TW4 7QJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr S Sandhu against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref is 01219/25/P2.
 - The development proposed is the change of use from 6 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to 8 bedroom HMO.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. These are:
 - a) Whether the location of the proposal would be suitable, with specific regard to access to services, facilities and good public transport links and the provision of satisfactory living conditions for existing occupiers; and,
 - b) The effect of the proposal upon parking availability in the area.

Reasons

Location

3. Located on the south side of the Windsor Road, the property is a 2 storey semi-detached house, located in a suburban residential area. The proposal is to convert the existing 6 bedroom HMO to an 8 bedroom HMO, converting an outbuilding into 2 bedrooms at the ground floor.
4. Policy SC10 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (September 2015) (LP) sets out criteria for the assessing HMOs to achieve sustainable mixed communities. Criterion d) requires that HMOs are located within convenient walking distance of town centre facilities and good public transport links. This is because proposals give rise to increased movements from home to shops, services and work by the multiple occupiers, and it is unlikely that each occupant would have access to a private car.
5. Within the supporting text, the convenient walking distance is 400m. The HMO Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (November 2017) also sets out that good accessibility is Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) Level 4 and above.

6. The property is located more than 400m from town centre facilities, being over a mile from Hounslow town centre. It also has a PTAL Level 2. The distance from the town centre to the site would considerably exceed the 400m distance and the nearby shops could not be considered as town centre facilities. Whilst the increase in occupants would not be substantial, it would introduce a larger number of occupants into an area that does not have convenient walking access to town centre facilities. Thus, the location of the proposal would fail to comply with the development plan policy in this regard.
7. Policy SC10 also requires that the property should have a minimum 'original' floor area greater than 130 square metres (sqm) to be suitable for conversion. The SPD sets out that this is because the Council has a pressing need for smaller family houses, and the impact of large HMOs on the residential amenity and character of the area is likely to give rise to serious harmful impact.
8. Despite the property already being a small HMO, it does not meet the minimum 'original' floor space for a larger HMO, of which this would be. This would fail to comply with Policy SC10. Furthermore, the increased movements, level of activity and comings and goings from the increased occupancy would have a notable impact upon this area, which is predominantly family homes. Nearby residents also report of noisy living conditions from kitchen equipment.
9. Consequently, the proposal would not be in a suitable location for a large HMO. Future occupants would not have convenient access to services, facilities and good public transport links. This would be contrary to Policy SC10 of the LP and the HMO SPD.

Parking availability

10. The Council considers that a development of this type would have a requirement of parking for 4 cars. The property has an area of hardstanding to the front, and whilst there is no associated dropped kerb, it is clearly used for parking.
11. Additionally, the appeal was supplemented with a Parking Stress Survey¹, which found an average parking stress of about 75%, with an average of 61 unoccupied parking spaces overnight. Whilst, the Council has not given any indication of whether this would be acceptable, generally, an observed parking stress of 85% - 90% is deemed to represent a very high uptake of kerb side parking. At this point, residents will begin to have difficulty parking close to their homes.
12. The findings of the survey indicate that there is capacity for parking within the area overnight. Thus, any increase in car ownership resulting from the proposal would be satisfactorily absorbed on surrounding roads. This is even considering the poor PTAL rating. There are reports of large vans blocking access to driveways, yet this is a matter for the police or local highways authority.
13. Therefore, the effect of the proposal upon parking availability in the area would be acceptable. This would be consistent with Policy EC2 of the LP, which seeks to secure a more sustainable local travel network.

¹ Alpha Parking, January 2024

Conclusion

14. Whilst the proposal would have an acceptable effect upon parking availability, the location is unsuitable and there is a policy conflict. There are no material circumstances that indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan, and for the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Katie McDonald

INSPECTOR