



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2025

by **Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/24/3349314

The Victoria, 757 Woolwich Road, Greenwich SE7 8LW

- 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 Abdul Mumtaz against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 24/0157/F.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a new first and second floor rear extension to the existing property to create 4no. additional 1-person studio flats, including the alteration of an existing 2-bedroom flat to become a 1-person studio flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a new first and second floor rear extension to the existing property to create 4no. additional 1-person studio flats, including the alteration of an existing 2-bedroom flat to become a 1-person studio flat at The Victoria, 757 Woolwich Road, Greenwich SE7 8LW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/0157/F, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would provide a suitable standard of living conditions for future occupiers, with particular regard to outside amenity space;
 - Whether the proposal provides a suitable mix of accommodation; and,
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area, including the Thames Barrier and Bowater Road Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

Living Conditions

3. The host building currently provides a hot food takeaway on the ground and lower-ground floors with residential accommodation above. This accommodation comprises a two-bedroom unit on the first floor, served by a private terrace, and a bedsit studio on the second floor. The bedsit is not served by any outside space. The proposal would extend the building and alter the upper floors, to provide 6 one-bed units comprising bedsits and one-bed flats.
4. Given the scale of the proposed units it is likely that they would be occupied by either single occupiers or couples rather than families with children. Mindful of this,

I consider that the typical use of any outside amenity space would revolve around a desire to sit outside and socialise.

5. Policy H5 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detail Policies (the RGLP) states that residential developments should provide a balcony, terrace or communal garden while Policy D6 of the London Plan (the LP) requires developments to provide 5m² of external amenity space for one-bed dwellings. The proposal does not include any external amenity space for future occupiers and would lead to the loss of an external space secured under the extant permission for one of the units.
6. I am mindful of the green spaces near the appeal site and that they would provide space for sitting outside and socialising. However, these spaces are detached from the appeal site and would require future occupiers to leave their properties to seek outside space. By requiring travel this would limit the attractiveness of spending time outside and likely reduce the number of more spontaneous or short moments spent outside. By being public spaces, future occupiers would likely not be able to relax as fully as in a private space and the types of socialising available to future occupiers would be more limited. Given the increase in residential development surrounding the appeal site, I cannot be confident that these parks could be relied upon to provide suitable space to accommodate the sole outside amenity space for six units.
7. In light of the above, future occupiers would not be provided with appropriate access to outside space which meets their likely typical daily needs. The quality of accommodation provided would, therefore, be poor and not provide a suitable standard of living conditions for future occupiers.
8. Although I recognise that permission 21/1887/F found that relying upon the parks was acceptable, this was for only one unit. The harm I have outlined above would, therefore, be much greater than that deemed acceptable under permission 21/1887/F.
9. Lacking any provision of outside space for future occupiers, the proposal would not provide a suitable standard of living conditions. It would therefore conflict with Policies DH1 and H5 of the RGLP and Policy D6 of the LP which collectively require developments to provide private outside space for future occupiers. The proposal would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), in particular Paragraph 135(f) which requires proposals to create places that promote health and well-being. It would also conflict with the guidance contained within the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (the SPG).

Accommodation Mix

10. The proposed scheme would replace the two existing units with six one-bedroom units. As such, it would provide no mix of unit sizes. Further, as it would result in the loss of a two-bedroom flat and a bedsit, it would also reduce the existing mix provided at the site. The Council's Policies and the London Plan are clear, under RGLP Policy H2 and LP Policy H10 that proposed residential developments must provide a mixture of unit sizes.
11. On a plain reading of these policies, it is clear that the proposal would not provide such a mix and would, therefore, conflict with the Council's development strategy.

12. I recognise that the scheme is relatively modest in scale, especially in relation to the larger blocks of flats currently under construction near the site. However, it would nevertheless not provide a mix of units in line with the requirements of the above policies. Lacking any evidence to the contrary, I cannot be confident that the proposal would not skew area's mix or prejudice the Council's strategy for accommodation across the plan area.
13. Although the appellant has suggested that the scale of the proposal and its location close to local amenities lends itself to studio apartments, the reason for this has not been substantiated. It has also not been demonstrated that there is a need for one-bed units for those currently occupying family homes. Without suitable evidence supporting these matters, they do not weigh in favour providing solely one-bed units. I also find that the appeal site could accommodate a mix of different unit sizes given that reference 21/1887/F provided such a mix.
14. By way of removing a two-bedroom flat and providing only one-bedroom flats, the proposal would not provide an appropriate mix of unit sizes and would therefore conflict with the Council's development strategy. It would therefore conflict with RGLP Policy H2 and LP Policy H10 as outlined above.

Character and Appearance

15. The appeal site is located next to the junction between Eastmoor Street and Woolwich Road, it is a tight and fairly rectangular plot that drops significantly away from Woolwich Road. The host building, a former public house now used as a hot food takeaway, has been extended under a previous permission to provide accommodation to the upper floors.
16. The front portion of the host building, that facing Woolwich Road, still retains its appearance as a former public house with detailing across the ground and first floors. This includes a tiled façade, wraparound sign and a large eagle that identify the building as the former Victoria, part of the Truman Hanbury Buxton and Co Ltd. The Council have identified this building as being locally listed due to its history, appearance and the extent to which the above frontage is still intact. Although the building has been extended to the rear and through a mansard roof, and is no longer a public house, I still find the building to be of sufficient historic interest as to be a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).
17. The appeal site is also within the Thames Barrier and Bowater Road Conservation Area (the CA). Although at the edge, it appears that the area's boundary was specifically drawn to include this building. The CA covers a sizeable and varied riverside area, which is characterised by a mixture of historic commercial and industrial buildings interspersed by more modern examples. The area shows its development and growth through time, and in part its significance stems from the range of buildings present that demonstrate its former connection to the river and its growth as an industrial and commercial area.
18. Given the surrounding modern industrial buildings, the residential development currently being carried out, and the large green spaces, the host building is read somewhat on its own with regard to the more historic style and scale. I find that the host building's contribution towards this area is that it helps signify the type of development that was once typical when the street scene was a more intimate crossroad.

19. The proposal would not extend over the NDHA element, and its mansard roof would be retained. The proposed additional floor would only be provided over the newer element. As the two-storey link between the old and new portions of the building would not extend upwards the additional floor would be visually and physically separated from the NDHA. As such, I do not find that the increase in height and bulk on this level would result in an overly dominant feature detrimental to the host building's character, appearance or historic interest.
20. The visual separation of the old and new elements would be further strengthened by the proposal reflecting the design and detail of the recently permitted extension. It would therefore be readily legible as a modern addition distinct from the NDHA and CA.
21. Whilst not subordinate, the proposal would nevertheless provide a smoother transition, in height and design, between the host building and the neighbouring residential development. As such, and along with the visual separation outlined above, I find that this would not be unacceptable.
22. The proposal would have a neutral impact on the historic interest of the host building and its contribution to the conservation area, and to the significance conservation area itself. The proposal would therefore conserve and preserve the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets. As such it would comply with Policies DH1, DH3 and DH(j) of the RGLP and LP Policies HC1 and D3 which collectively, and amongst other matters, seek for proposals to be of a high-quality design that positively contributes to, and has a positive relationship with an area. They further seek for proposals to protect and enhance heritage assets, including non-designated ones, and conserve their significance. The proposal would also comply with Chapters 12 and 16 of the Framework which similarly seeks for high quality design that conserves heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource.

Conditions

23. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and the advice on planning conditions set out by the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. In the interests of clarity and enforceability, I have made some changes to the wording.
24. For certainty, I have set out the timescale for the commencement of development. A condition is also necessary, for certainty and enforceability, requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
25. Due to the proposed works relationship to the NDHA and conservation area it is necessary to attach conditions requiring further details of materials, fenestration and doors. These would ensure that the character and appearance of the heritage assets are protected. It would not be necessary for these conditions to be pre-commencement to ensure appropriate design or enforceability.
26. In the interests of proper waste management, conditions requiring the provision of the waste storage and collection areas are needed. To ensure sustainable transport options are provided, a condition securing the bicycle parking area is necessary. For the purposes of flood risk safety, a condition securing the floor height of the first floor is also necessary.

27. However, conditions controlling water consumption, and the provision of boilers would not be necessary as they would duplicate other legislation. Moreover, I find that it would be overly onerous to limit a future occupier's access to water.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

28. There is no dispute that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing, and the proposal would provide 4 new dwellings and contribute towards the Council's housing land supply. It would also lead to a small and time limited economic benefit during the construction phase, as well as some limited social and economic benefits resulting from future occupiers. I also recognise that it would have good access to sustainable transport options, including the option to walk to services and facilities. Given the small scale of the proposal these matters would at most attract moderate weight.
29. Although the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, such a lack of harm is not a benefit in itself and so weighs neutrally in my determination of the appeal.
30. Conversely, the proposal would not provide a suitable standard of living conditions for future occupiers and would not provide an appropriate mixture of unit sizes. These impacts are contrary to both local and national planning policy and, given the scale of the scheme and the nature of the harm I attach these moderate weight.
31. Taking everything into account, I consider that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits identified above. As a result, the application of Paragraph 11d of the Framework indicates that permission should be granted. Therefore, in the circumstances of this appeal, the material considerations above justify making a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.
32. Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal is allowed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing No's 001(Rev. P1), 002(Rev. P1), 003(Rev. P1), 004(Rev. P2), 005(Rev. P1), 006(Rev. P1) and 007(Rev. P1), and with the Design, Access and Planning Statement, and the updated Flood risk Assessment dated 10 April 2024.
- 3) Before their use in the development hereby permitted, full details of all facing materials and finishes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved drawings and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

- 4) Before they are installed or otherwise provided, detailed plans and sections at a scale of at least 1:10 showing the windows, window reveals, doors, entrances, recessed brick headers and panels, and balustrades, as well as 1:1 scale drawings showing the moulding profiles of existing and proposed meeting rails, glazing bars, transoms and mullions shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be constructed and retained for the lifetime of the development in full accordance with the approved details.
- 5) The waste storage area as shown in drawing 004 (Rev. P2) shall be fully implemented and made available for use prior to the first occupation of the approved commercial unit and shall be maintained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.
- 6) Prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, a collection area for temporary refuse and recycling storage shall be provided in accordance with details first submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. It shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development.
- 7) Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted cycle parking facilities, as shown on drawing No 021 (Rev. P1) shall be made available for use and shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development.
- 8) The first-floor finished floor level must be set no lower than 8.35 metres above Ordnance Datum, in line with the submitted flood risk assessment. This mitigation measure shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/phasing arrangement. The measure detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.