



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2025

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/25/3359323

115a-117a Belgrave Road, Redbridge, Ilford IG1 3LG

- 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. Asghar Ali and Ms. Zainab Ali against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref is 1845/24.
 - The development proposed is installation of a rear access door and railing. Remove chimneys. Blocked roof extensions above rear out-rigger. Loft conversion with rear dormers and four front roof lights to contain one self contained flat (one x 1-bedroom). Installation of an external staircase to loft. Alterations to external finishes
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development from the appeal form as it accurately describes the proposal, but removed the term 'retrospective' as that is not a form of development.
3. The first reason for refusal states that the plans do not accurately show works undertaken at the site. That has no bearing on the merits of the proposal as shown on the plans, and upon which I have based my determination.
4. Notwithstanding the above, the application form states that the proposed development has started, and from my site visit I could see that a development at least comparable to the appeal proposal has occurred.
5. The Council planning officer report refers to harm to the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties. This did not manifest in a reason for refusal, and the main issues below reflect this.
6. I was not met at the site as arranged but was able to undertake an adequate assessment.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - Whether adequate living conditions would be provided for occupiers of the proposed development; and

- Whether the proposed development would make appropriate provision for cycle parking and refuse storage.

Reasons

Character and appearance

8. The appeal site comprises two adjoining flats above commercial units. They are in a parade of similar properties in an otherwise largely residential neighbourhood. The area appears as a planned suburb; its streets are laid out uniformly, as are the houses within. Buildings have been personalised and altered but traditional features remain prominent. This is particularly true of roof forms; nearby houses generally exhibit traditional pitched roof forms to front and back. Where roof dormer and outrigger extensions have been added, these are generally set back so that the host roof remains discernible. Overall, there is a broadly consistent, traditional character locally.
9. The parade adheres and contributes to the character of the area; its ridgeline continues on from the domestic terrace alongside it, with which it shares the same basic form and shape. This includes at roof level, where pitched roofs, including over two-storey rear outriggers, are a unifying feature.
10. The appeal proposal is to erect two linked roof extensions across the rear of both appeal site properties. The first is a continuous, full width rear dormer. The second is a cuboid addition above the rear outriggers. The first of these would allow the creation of a new, second-floor flat. Access would be from the rear, via an external staircase from the street.
11. The dormers and cuboid would replace all but the slightest slither of the original rear roofs and outriggers, dominating the site and the parade. It would erode significantly the traditional character of both, and introduce a wholly incongruous, inelegant, and invasive development that would be prominent from along Wanstead Park Road. These harms would be exacerbated by the loss, as part of the proposal, of parapet walls and chimneys, both of which are traditional features typical of the area.
12. That the development may, as advanced by the appellant, avoid overhanging neighbouring land has no bearing on its design merits as set out above.
13. The proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies D3 of the London Plan (2021) and LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) where they require development to respect local character and make a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location.

Living Conditions

14. The new flat included in the proposed development would incorporate four rooms, a bedroom, a reception room, a living room, and a kitchen, set out side by side (the main rooms). These would be accessed from a corridor, which would also lead to a shower room and storage area.
15. The four main rooms would be served by one rooflight each. These would be modestly sized, north facing, and placed high in the roofslope, above the eyeline of occupiers. There would be no other external openings, save for the door to the flat.

16. The four main rooms would receive little direct sunlight, a limited amount of natural daylight, and have extremely limited outlook. The corridor would be very dark and have no outlook. There would be little or no opportunity for natural ventilation. No private external amenity space would be provided at all. Overall, living conditions for occupiers of the proposed flat would be oppressive and dispiriting.
17. The proposed development would provide inadequate living conditions for its occupiers, contrary to Policies D6 of the London Plan (2021) and LP26 and LP29 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) where they require housing development to provide high standards of accommodation in terms of the quality and arrangement of internal space and external private amenity space.

Facilities

18. Policy T5 of the London Plan requires 1 cycle space for a 1 person, 1 bedroom dwelling, or 1.5 spaces for a 2 person, 1 bedroom dwelling. The appellant has advanced no argument that this provision is unnecessary in this instance, though the plans do not demonstrate provision for cycle parking.
19. It is not evident that any cycle parking facilities could be provided at the site; The access point on Wanstead Park Road would not evidently have space enough, and manoeuvring a cycle up the external stairs would not evidently be feasible given the number of steps and constricted nature of the space.
20. The appellant has supplied a waste management statement, saying that waste would be bagged and placed within the boundary of the property near to the highway. It is also stated that recyclable waste should be placed in recycling boxes.
21. The only area within the boundary of the property near to the highway would be that near the foot of the external stairs. That is a small area, which appears to serve an existing dwelling at 117a Belgrave Road already. No information is provided as to how the waste and recycling from the proposed flat and that of No 117a could be accommodated safely in that area without hindering access, and it is not self-evident that it could be.
22. Overall, the proposed development would make inadequate provision for cycle parking and refuse storage and, as it is not evident that either could be provided on site, the imposition of planning conditions requiring subsequent agreement over such matters would be inappropriate. In these respects, the proposed development conflicts with Policies T5 of the London Plan (2021) and LP23 and LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan (2018).

Other Matters

23. The appellant has not contested that financial contributions, secured through a unilateral undertaking, are required to mitigate effects on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Even so, no such undertaking has been provided.
24. The contributions in question are to mitigate the effects of the development, they are not benefits capable of affecting the planning balance so as to overcome the harms I have identified above. It has not been necessary for me to consider the matter in detail, therefore.

Planning Balance

25. The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. The provisions of paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) are therefore engaged.
26. The appeal scheme would result in an additional dwelling that could be built quickly, helping towards undersupply in the Borough, and supporting the wider Governmental aim of significantly boosting housing supply. Temporary and lasting economic benefits would arise during the construction phase and from residential occupation. These benefits attract positive weight in my determination in and of themselves, and that weight is increased in this instance by the local housing land supply position.
27. The site is in a sustainable location and the appeal scheme would make effective use of land. The appeal scheme accords strongly to the aims of the Framework in these regards. However, the Framework also considers the creation of high quality buildings and places to be fundamental to the planning and development process, an aim including the creation of places which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. There is a high degree of correlation between the Framework and the Redbridge Local Plan (2018) in these regards.
28. Overall, the harm the appeal scheme would cause to the character and appearance of the area, and the living conditions for future occupiers, alongside the absence of reasonably required facilities combines to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits identified above.

Conclusion

29. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
30. The appeal is dismissed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR