



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2025

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/25/3359230

4 Holstock Road, Ilford IG1 1LG

- 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 Nasir Mahmood Sheikh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref is 2349/24.
 - The development proposed is described as change of use from existing HMO to a large HMO for 8 people Sui Generis including internal alteration (Retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would provide acceptable living conditions for its occupants, with particular regard to internal space and communal living provision.

Reasons

3. Policy LP6 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2018 (the RLP) sets out criteria for the conversion of properties to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Criterion 2(a) requires a minimum gross internal floor area of 180 sqm for large HMOs. From the information before me, the appeal property measures approximately 152 sqm, falling significantly short of this threshold. This shortfall strongly indicates that the property is not suitable for conversion to a large HMO.
4. The Redbridge Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document 2019 (SPD), while not policy, provides relevant guidance on minimum space standards in HMOs. Annex A of the SPD specifies that a living room for 8 occupants should be at least 18 sqm, and that the combined size of the living room and kitchen should be 31 sqm. The proposed living room is only 16.6 sqm, and the combined area is 29 sqm – both below the recommended minimums. These deficiencies would result in cramped communal spaces, undermining the quality of life for occupants.
5. The appellant contends that the proposal complies with other elements of Policy LP6. However, compliance with some criteria does not outweigh the fundamental failure to meet essential space standards, which are in place to ensure that HMOs provide a safe, healthy, and comfortable living environment.
6. It is further argued that Policy LP26 of the RLP, which seeks a high standard of internal accommodation, does not apply to HMOs. I disagree. The policy applies

broadly to all forms of residential development and is therefore relevant in assessing the quality of accommodation proposed.

7. Taken together, the shortfalls in internal space and communal provision lead me to conclude that the development would result in substandard living conditions for the occupants, contrary to Policies LP6 and LP26 of the RLP.

Other Matters

8. The appeal site lies within the zone of influence of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a protected European site. Residential development in this area is likely to increase recreational pressure on the SAC, potentially affecting its ecological integrity. To address this, the Council has adopted a strategic mitigation approach, requiring financial contributions secured by a legal agreement.
9. In this case, no completed legal agreement is before me to secure the necessary mitigation. Although the appellant has indicated a willingness to resolve this matter, mitigation must be in place at the time of decision and cannot be deferred. Nevertheless, as the appeal is being dismissed on other substantive planning grounds, it is not necessary to consider this issue further.

Planning Balance

10. The Housing Delivery Test results show that the Council delivered only 39% of its housing requirement, triggering paragraph 11d) ii) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
11. The proposal would provide additional units of shared accommodation, contributing modestly to housing supply in a borough with a significant shortfall. This weighs in favour of the development.
12. However, the harm arising from the failure to meet minimum space standards is substantial. The resulting poor living conditions would conflict with the objectives of the development plan and the Framework, which seek to ensure high-quality, sustainable housing.
13. These adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the modest benefits of the proposal. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply. Even if that was not the case, the absence of a completed legal agreement to mitigate impacts on the SAC would have provided a strong and separate reason for refusing the proposal.

Conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, that justify a departure from the development plan. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR