



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2025

by F P Tinsley MA (Hons) MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/W/25/3363865

13 Princes Road, Buckhurst Hill, IG9 5EE.

- 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 Takkas Property Investments Ltd against the decision of Epping Forrester District Council.
 - The application reference is Ref: EPF/2493/24
 - The development proposed is 'Proposed conversion of an existing dwelling into 2 x flats.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of an existing dwelling into 2 x flats at 13 Princes Road, Buckhurst Hill IG9 5EE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref EPF/2493/24, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. During my site visit, I confirmed that the development for which permission is sought has already commenced and is substantially complete. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis, taking into account the plans submitted and development on site which accords with those plans.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are:
 - the effect of the development on the character of the site and surrounding area.
 - the effect of the development on the living conditions of surrounding occupiers with regard to disturbance and additional demand for on-street car parking.

Reasons

Character of the site and surroundings.

4. The development does not alter the external appearance of the building, which remains as previously existing or as modified under separate planning permissions not subject to this appeal. Therefore, there is no impact on the character or appearance of the area arising from changes to the building's exterior.

5. The Council's concern relates to the impact on the character of the area resulting from the subdivision of the former dwelling, leading to the loss of a traditional terraced family home. This is considered by the Council as contrary to the established residential pattern of the area and, consequently, to Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest Local Plan 2011–2033 – Part 1 (2023) (the Local Plan).
6. In addition to design considerations, Policy DM9 (High Quality Design) requires all development to respond positively to its context, drawing on local character and the natural and historic environment. Both the Council and interested parties argue that the proposal conflicts with this aspect of the policy, as it introduces flats into an area predominantly characterised by traditional two-storey family orientated dwellings.
7. The character of Princes Road is mixed, both in terms of architectural design and the types of uses present. While the area is predominantly residential, there are other uses on the street, including a public house and a childcare facility. The appellant has also identified several properties on the street that are either converted dwellings or purpose-built blocks of flats. Nos. 35 and 37 Princes Road are an example of dwellings sharing a single entrance from the street that I observed while undertaking my site visit. Although the appeal site forms part of an attractive terrace of dwellings that have not been subject to conversion, I am not persuaded that the modest scale of the proposed development, converting a single dwelling into two flats, would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. While it is suggested that there may be a cumulative impact in association with similar developments in the vicinity, leading to an erosion of the area's character, I have not been presented with any evidence to support this claim, nor with any planning policy specifically aimed at safeguarding traditional residential dwellings from such conversions.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the development before me complies with the requirements of Policy DM9 of the Development Plan. The proposed development responds positively to the character of the site and surrounding area.

Living conditions of surrounding occupiers.

9. The Council has identified that the conversion from a single dwellinghouse to two separate households may result in increased comings and goings, as well as potentially conflicting lifestyles, which could impact the amenity of neighbouring properties. No harm has been identified in relation to overlooking, loss of privacy or internal noise transfer etc. However, additional external activity, such as increased use of the rear garden, has been cited as a potential source of disturbance within this residential setting. The concern can be summarised as arising from an intensification of the use of the premises due to the conversion.
10. While Policy DM9 requires that proposals take account of the privacy and amenity of neighbouring residents, I am not persuaded that the development would result in additional harm in this regard when compared to a large single dwelling, such as one accommodating a family with several children. The development provides four bedspaces and is therefore comparable in scale to a typical family home. Furthermore, I have not been presented with any evidence demonstrating that the use of two one-bedroom flats would result in a materially greater intensity of use than a single large dwelling.

11. The potential impact of additional on-street parking generated by the development has been identified as a negative effect on the living conditions of surrounding occupiers. Although the appellant has indicated that the development will be 'car-free', there is no mechanism in place to secure this. Both a single dwelling and two flats have the potential to generate requests for residents' permits within the Controlled Parking Zone surrounding the appeal site. The flats could result in marginally more parking permits being issued. However, I have not been provided with any evidence regarding current demand for parking spaces in the area. Importantly, the site is located within a five-minute walk of Buckhurst Hill Tube station and is in close proximity to retail and other service facilities on Queens Road. For these reasons, I do not consider that the development is likely to generate significantly more demand for on-street parking than a single dwelling would, nor that it would negatively affect the living conditions of neighbouring residents in any other regard.
12. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy DM9 of the Development Plan, which, among other things, seeks to protect the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Other Matters

13. The development has the potential to generate additional demand for local school places, healthcare services, and public transport. However, I have not been presented with any evidence regarding the availability or capacity of these services, aside from the noted proximity to Buckhurst Hill Tube station. Any additional demand is likely to be modest given the limited scale of the development. Moreover, the original dwelling on the site would also have generated demand in these areas. For these reasons, I consider that any additional pressure on local services resulting from the development would be negligible. I therefore attach only very modest weight to this matter in my determination of the appeal, which is insufficient to outweigh the conclusions reached in relation to the main issues identified above.

Conditions

14. I have considered the conditions proposed by the Council against the tests set out in the Framework. Where necessary, I have amended their wording in the interests of clarity and effectiveness. The appellant has had the opportunity to review and comment on the Council's suggested conditions which were included in the Council's Statement of Case.
15. In the interests of certainty, I have imposed standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and adherence to the approved plans. To safeguard the privacy of adjacent properties, access to the flat roofs to the rear of the development shall be for maintenance or emergency purposes only. The flat roof shall not be used as a seating area, roof garden, terrace, patio, or any similar amenity space. No condition relating to materials is included as there are no alterations to the external appearance of the building as extended by previous permissions.

Conclusion

16. The development complies with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. The appeal is allowed.

F P Tinsley

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
 - 2024.019.PA2 01
 - 2024.019.PA2 02
 - 2024.019.PA2 03
 - 2024.019.PA2 04
 - 2024.019.PA2 05
 - 2024.019.PA2 06
 - 2024.019.PA2 07
 - 2024.019.PA2 08
 - 2024.019.PA2 09
 - 2024.019.PA2 10
 - 2024.019.PA2 11
 - 2024.019.PA2 12
 - 2024.019.PA2 13
 - 2024.019.PA2 14
 - 2024.019.PA2 15
 - 2024.019.PA2 16
 - 2024.019.PA2 17
 - 2024.019.PA2 18
3. Access to the flat roofs to the rear of the development shall be for maintenance or emergency purposes only and the flat roofs shall not be used as a seating area, roof garden, terrace, patio, or similar amenity area.

******End Of Schedule******