



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 October 2025

by **H Whitfield BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/25/3369505

2 Ottawa Gardens, Dagenham, Barking and Dagenham RM10 9YB

- 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 Ms Melisha Szczecinski against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
- The application Ref is 25/00649/FULL.
- The development proposed is the conversion of the existing single storey side extension into a studio flat with front porch and parking, refuse and cycle storage.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - local housing needs and the stock of family-sized housing in the Borough; and
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Housing needs and family-sized housing

3. The appeal site is located within a predominately residential area which is characterised by semi-detached and terraced dwellings. There is an extant permission¹ on the site for a 2-bedroomed dwelling which would replace the appeal property's single storey side range which is the subject of this appeal.
4. Policy SP3 of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Plan 2020-2037 (the Local Plan) states, amongst other things, that in order to address the Borough's specific housing needs, the Council will prioritise self-contained family housing to ensure new residential developments do not limit their supply. Family housing is defined by the Local Plan as a dwelling that by virtue of its size, layout and design is suitable for a family with children to live in and generally has two or more bedrooms. In the London Plan (2021) this is defined as a dwelling with three or more bedrooms.
5. Policy DMH5 of the Local Plan relates to houses in multiple occupation (HMO), however, one of its objectives is ensure preservation of the stock of housing capable of accommodating families with children. Both SP3 and DMH5 are consistent with paragraph 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which states

¹ Council Ref. 23/00436/FULL

that policies should reflect the housing needs of different groups in the community, including families with children.

6. The development proposes the conversion of the single storey side range of 2 Ottawa Gardens to a studio flat. This would result in a reduction of the floor space and garden area for the retained dwelling at No 2 (which would remain a 3-bedroomed dwelling). The Council raises concerns that the subdivision of the dwelling would result in a significant reduction of internal and external space for the retained family-sized dwelling. However, this is not substantiated by any evidence that it would fail to meet the internal and external space standards set by Policy D6 of the London Plan or result in a dwelling of a size, layout or design that would be unsuitable for a family. While the development would reduce the size of No 2, it would retain a reasonable amount of internal and external space and therefore would not compromise or result in the loss of the existing family-sized dwelling.
7. In quantitative terms, the appeal proposal would intensify the use of the site as it would constitute an additional unit over and above its host, No 2. However, the use of the appeal site to deliver an additional dwelling has previously been established through the extant scheme and therefore the contribution that this appeal scheme would make to the overall housing land supply would be neutral. This is because the extant permission is a housing commitment which already contributes to the current housing land supply and there would be no further increase of dwellings in numerical terms as a consequence of the appeal scheme.
8. In terms of the type and size of the unit, the scheme would result in the development of a studio flat. Unlike the extant scheme, this would not constitute a family-sized dwelling and therefore would not meet the identified local needs for family housing which is prioritised by the Local Plan. The Council contends that the extant permission would make a more positive contribution to the Borough's housing stock in light of the identified shortfall of family housing. This is uncontested by the appellant.
9. There is no substantive evidence before me that indicates this extant permission is not deliverable. This would deliver a family dwelling which is prioritised by the Local Plan and for which the evidence indicates there is a greater need. The appeal scheme would preclude this development from coming forward, reducing the opportunity for one family dwelling to be delivered on this plot to contribute to the existing housing stock.
10. Overall, this appeal scheme would therefore fail to make the most efficient and effective use of the potential of the appeal site. The consequences of this would amount to an adverse impact on the future supply of dwellings to meet the identified local housing needs, where such provision is already constrained. This is contrary to the aims of Chapter 11 of the Framework insofar as it supports development that makes efficient and effective use of under-utilised land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing.
11. Reference has been made to the studio flat meeting a need for smaller, affordable accommodation for individuals or couples, for which the appellant states there is a pressing need. While this may be the case, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate this demand or how the studio flat would align with the local housing need. Furthermore, while the application form indicates the development would be for affordable rent, there is no mechanism before me that would secure the dwelling for these purposes, I therefore cannot treat it as such. The appellant states that this appeal scheme is preferable to the extant permission as it would have less of an

impact on the retained garden area for No 2. However, neither scheme would appear to have an unacceptable effect on the level of external amenity space for the retained dwelling and therefore this is a neutral factor.

12. For the above reasons, while I have found the development would not adversely affect the existing family-sized dwelling, based on the evidence before me, I conclude that the scheme would fail to meet the prioritised local housing needs of the Borough. This is contrary to Policy SP3 of the Local Plan and Policy H9 of the London Plan insofar as they support developments that address the Borough's specific housing needs through prioritising self-contained family housing and promote the most efficient use of the existing housing stock.
13. While the Council refers to Policy DMH5 of the Local Plan and Policy D6 of the London Plan, as these policies relate to proposals for HMO's and prescribed housing quality standards against which the Council has not articulated any conflict, they are not determinative in respect of this main issue.

Character and appearance

14. The appeal site is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located on a corner plot on the junction of Ottawa Gardens and Wellington Drive. The site is within a predominantly residential area characterised mainly by two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings that are mostly consistent in appearance.
15. Properties follow a generally uniform building line, set back from the pavement behind front gardens and parking spaces and there is a relatively regular pattern of development. However, the appeal dwelling has a large single-storey side range which contrasts with the surrounding rhythm of development in the street scene. Some properties in the area have also been extended and altered over time including through the addition of front porches of differing styles and scales, which also provides variety in the street scene.
16. The porch proposed on the existing lean-to side range would be of a very similar scale and design to the porch on 2 Ottawa Gardens, which it would be positioned adjacent to. This would give the appearance of a double entrance which is not a feature seen on properties in the immediate vicinity. However, the design and proportions of the porch and the proposed materials would not be dissimilar to other front porches in the surrounding area and would not be unacceptably dominating. Nor would it be particularly incongruous in the street scene given it would not extend beyond the front elevation of the porch on No 2 and thus would not disrupt the prevailing pattern of development. Moreover, while a porch on a single storey lean-to range is not typical, as there is a degree of variety in the street scene and it would otherwise respect the proportions, materials and overall pattern of surrounding development, it would not be so incongruous to amount to harm to the character and appearance of the area overall.
17. For the above reasons, I conclude the development would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This complies with Policies SP2 and DMD1 of the Local Plan and Policy D4 of the London Plan insofar as they promote high-quality design that relates to its context and local character. It also complies with paragraph 135 of the Framework that seeks to ensure developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

18. The Council has raised no objections to the scheme in relation to other matters, including the effects on living conditions or highway safety. However, these matters are neutral factors and do not alter my findings on this appeal.

Planning Balance

19. I have concluded the development would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or adversely affect the existing family-sized dwelling. However, based on the evidence before me, I have found that the appeal scheme would fail to meet the prioritised local housing needs of the Borough, contrary to the abovementioned policies of the Local Plan and the London Plan. This is sufficient to bring the development into conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Development that conflicts with the development plan should normally be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
20. The Council concedes that it has failed to satisfy the Housing Delivery Test with housing completions at 62% of its target and therefore paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is engaged. Which in this case means granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies including making effective use of land in meeting the need for homes.
21. On the one hand, the scheme would deliver one smaller dwelling in a residential area in relatively close proximity to services, facilities and public transport. The development would therefore make a small but beneficial contribution to the choice and mix of homes in the borough. As a small-site, the associated development could also be built-out reasonably quickly. However, given the scale of the development, any social, economic or environmental benefits associated with the delivery of one dwelling would be relatively limited, even taking account of the objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing in the Framework and the Council's housing land supply position. Moreover, given the extant permission on the site for one dwelling, the contribution to the overall supply, and therefore the associated benefits, would be neutral. Therefore, the weight attached to these benefits overall is limited.
22. On the other hand, the development would fail to meet the prioritised housing needs for the Borough and would result in an inefficient use of land. This is contrary to the Framework, which promotes an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and the delivery of homes to meet an area's identified housing need. Consequently, this attracts substantial weight.
23. As such, in the specific circumstances of this case, the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework, when taken as a whole. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

H Whitfield INSPECTOR