Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2017

by Timothy C King  BA(Hons) MRTPi
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5060/W/17/3175823
37 Gordon Road, Chadwell Heath, RM6 6DD

- 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 VNM Property against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham.
- The application Ref 16/01503/FUL, dated 21 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2017.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and construction of one replacement and two additional two storey, two bedroom dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the proposal’s effects on highway safety and also the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to on-street parking.

Reasons

3. The proposal would involve the loss of the existing bungalow and its replacement with three, two-bed dwellings. No existing on-site parking space exists and none is proposed.

4. The site lies at the corner of Gordon Road and Whalebone Grove where on-street parking is restricted due to the presence of double yellow lines running for a short distance into both streets. At my site visit, carried out on a weekday morning, I noticed that kerbside parking was heavy on both sides of these two streets with little spare capacity, particularly in proximity to the appeal site. The yellow lines clearly impact in this regard, bunching up the cars parked immediately beyond.

5. The London Plan’s maximum parking standards requires less than 1 space for each residential unit of 1-2 bed size. However, the document also mentions that in outer London areas with low PTAL ratings (generally 0-1) boroughs should consider higher levels of provision. I acknowledge that the appeal site has a PTAL rating of 2 but this is still low and the degree of kerbside parking witnessed would tend to suggest an existing significant level of car ownership. Further, this is more than likely exacerbated by the fact that a number of local properties, both in Gordon Road and Whalebone Grove do not have sufficient space within their front curtilages to allow for off-street parking. Despite the
cycle storage indicated for the proposed dwellings I have no reason to believe that the development would not aggravate the current levels of parking stress.

6. The appellant, in support of the appeal, has brought to my attention two particular cases. One involves a successful appeal decision at 16 Gordon Road, down the street, where planning permission was recently granted for the conversion of an existing 6-bed bungalow into two smaller dwellings. The other relates to 68 Whalebone Grove, a nearby site where, nearly three years ago, in early 2015, the Council granted permission for two additional residential units at the site, one a new 3-bed house.

7. In the former case the Inspector comments that parking spaces were available close to the appeal property. From my observations at the site visit I did note that parking stress along the stretch of Gordon Road in immediate proximity to No 16 was slightly lighter, but I am also mindful that two on-site parking spaces already existed and would remain as part of the scheme. In the latter case I can similarly confirm that kerbside parking close to the property, whilst heavy, was not so congested as that of the circumstances affecting the property now at appeal where car parking dominates the street. This, in turn, impacts on the ability of pedestrians to cross the street safely, which Policy BR10 of the Council’s Borough Wide Development Policies Development Plan Document (BWDP) serves to guard against.

8. The Council, whilst raising concerns as to highway safety issues arising from the development also consider that additional on-street parking would have implications for the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. To this end BWDP Policy BP8 seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that occupiers are not exposed to unacceptable levels of disturbance such as traffic movements arising from a development. I consider that the net increase of two dwellings at the site would impact unduly in this regard.

9. I have taken into account the appellant’s suggestion that up to five cars could potentially park along the kerbsides outside the property and that some additional parking space could be made available by the removal of the dropped kerb at the far end of the property’s return on Gordon Road. Whilst the latter might be the case this would only be minimal and my observations do not support these assertions as a whole.

10. I have had regard to the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework that development should only be refused on traffic grounds where the residual cumulative impacts would be severe. Nonetheless, in this particular instance I consider that the potential adverse effects highlighted would be significant.

11. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to both highway safety and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, contrary to the aims of BWDP Policies BR10 and BP8.

12. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal does not succeed.

Timothy C King
INSPECTOR