
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2013

by Terry G Phillimore MA MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 6 November 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/A/13/2192628

261 High Street, Epping CM16 4BP

- 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 Mr G Di Piazza against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/1924/12, dated 28 August 2012, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2013.
 - The development proposed is conversion of office space (disused) into 3 self contained flats and alterations to existing bedsits into a single self contained flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of office space (disused) into 3 self contained flats and alterations to existing bedsits into a single self contained flat at 261 High Street, Epping CM16 4BP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref EPF/1924/12, dated 28 August 2012, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 08003.SP, 08003.002 Rev:P1, 08003.003 Rev:P1, 08003.004 Rev:P1.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect the proposal would have on highway conditions in the vicinity.

Reasons

3. The proposal relates to first floor accommodation which currently comprises 3 bedsits and vacant offices. The Council raises no objection to the principle of conversion to all residential use, with evidence submitted to show a lack of demand for the office space.
4. Policy ST6 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2006 expects all development proposals to provide off-site parking in accordance with its standards. The current relevant standards are set out in the Essex County Council Parking Standards Design and Good Practice 2009.

5. No off-street parking is associated with the proposal. According to the appellant's undisputed calculations, under the standards there would be a requirement for 5 spaces for the existing uses and 6 for the proposal. The parking standards document identifies that the standards can be reduced in town centre locations with good access to public transport.
6. The site is located within Epping Town centre. This is agreed to be a sustainable location with ready access to facilities. Notwithstanding that the existing uses are long-established, the parking demand generated by the proposal is unlikely to be significantly greater than that resulting from these uses. In this context the application of a relaxation from the normal standards would favour allowing the proposal, and there is no material conflict with the development plan in this respect.
7. In addition, the proposal would be a sustainable development which warrants support according to the National Planning Policy Framework. This advises that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. There is no evidence to suggest that there would be such an impact in this case.
8. The Council refers to another appeal decision (ref APP/J1535/A/11/2160122) in support of the refusal, but that related to a proposal largely involving new build accommodation in a different town centre (Waltham Abbey), and therefore differed materially from the current scheme.
9. Listed building consent has been granted by the Council for the proposed works (ref EPF/1938/12) and the conversion would preserve the character and appearance of the Epping Conservation Area.
10. A condition specifying the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. The appellant suggests that provision for cycle parking within the site could be made. While this would be welcome, in the circumstances it is not necessary for the proposal to be acceptable, and therefore a planning condition requiring such provision is not warranted.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

T G Phillimore

INSPECTOR