
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2016

by Daniel Hartley MTP MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/D/16/3156895

66 Bellenden Road, Southwark, London SE15 4RQ

- 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 T Grima against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref 16/AP/0472, dated 5 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear dormer and 2 No roof windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Holly Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a semi detached house located within a predominantly residential area. It is one of four semi detached dwellings that fall within a row along Bellenden Road. Apart from some variations in respect of front porches, these dwellings are all essentially the same in terms of appearance and scale. The four dwellings are "Arts and Crafts" style properties and the general uniformity of scale and design when viewed from Bellenden Road positively adds to the character and appearance of Holly Grove Conservation Area (CA).
 4. Whilst the scale and type of dwellings in the wider street is varied, in general terms there is a common theme in terms of a uniformity of roof design within and amongst each of the residential blocks. In the immediate area, and notwithstanding the height of each of the residential blocks/terraces, there are small but nonetheless distinctive gaps which provide an important separation/relief between developments. Collectively, these characteristics give this part of the CA its distinctive character. Further afield, there are a number of more traditional properties which are listed. I shall return to this issue later in this decision.
 5. It is proposed to erect a two storey side extension to the side of the house which would be set back by about 1.37 metres from the front elevation of the
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house. There would be a single storey addition to the rear of the two storey extension which, at its furthest point, would be in parallel with the existing single storey rear dining room. The proposal would include alterations to the main hipped roof of the house: a gabled roof would be formed to the proposed two storey side extension and as part of the loft conversion it is also proposed to construct a single rear dormer and two roof lights.

6. Whilst the proposed two storey side extension would be set in from the front elevation of the house, its associated roof would not be set down from the ridge line of the main dwelling. Furthermore, it is proposed to replace the hipped roof of the dwelling with a gabled roof and to enclose the gap between the host property and No 68 Bellenden Road. Owing to the scale and design of the two storey side extension, I consider that it would not be sympathetic to the overall balance and symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings (or indeed in respect of the roof symmetry afforded to all four semi-detached properties) and that it would appear dominant and out of place when viewed within the street-scene.
7. Whilst the gap between the appeal property and No 68 Bellenden Road is relatively small, it nonetheless provides an important break and relief between developments. Whilst single storey development may be acceptable in this location (subject to an appropriate set back), I consider that the proposed two storey development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and that it would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. I consider that this part of the development would have an unacceptable "terracing" impact and that it would detract from the small, but yet important, spacing between blocks of residential development.
8. I concur with the Council that the single storey extension to the rear would not look out of place or cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties. However, this part of the proposal is not severable from proposed two storey development.
9. In respect of the dormer (and the rooflights) these are also physically associated with the wider proposals. I do not share the Council's view that the proposed dormer would cause harm to the setting of the nearby listed buildings. There are a number of rear dormers within the wider setting of the appeal site, although in pure design terms it would have been preferable to have seen a dormer which was better aligned with the first floor window level proportions of the appeal dwelling.
10. In respect of the rear development, my main concern relates to the overall shape/alterations to the main roof of the host dwelling. It would detract from the uniformity of roof design amongst the four semi detached. Whilst there are mature trees to the rear of the appeal property (some evergreen and some deciduous), at certain times of the year the proposed roof would be visible from a number of surrounding residential properties in the locality. This development would be harmful to the setting of the CA when viewed from surrounding residential properties. However, having considered the separation distances involved, I do not consider that harm would be caused to the setting of the defined listed buildings (ie Nos 31-41 Highshore Road and Nos 21-29 Lyndhurst Terrace).

11. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. In the context of Paragraphs 133 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I conclude that the harm to the significance of the CA is less than substantial; but I do not consider that there are any identified public benefits sufficient to outweigh that harm. The proposal would not therefore accord with the design and conservation aims of the Framework; Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016; Strategic Policy 12 of the Core Strategy 2011; saved Policies 3.12, 3.13, 3.16 and 3.18 of the Southwark Plan 2007; the 2015 Technical Update to the Residential Design Standards SPD 2011 and the Holly Grove Conservation Area Appraisal.

Other Matters

12. I note that the appellant requires the additional space so that he can work from home and so that members of the wider family can sometimes stay. However, these matters do not outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.
13. The appellant has made reference to the Holly Grove Conservation Appraisal which at paragraph 3.2.8 describes the Bellenden Road area as being one *"where there is little in the way of interest or continuity in the architectural styles employed and the building line is fairly inconsistent"*. I acknowledge these comments, but this does not mean that the duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA should be ignored or somehow diluted. For the reasons outlined, I do not consider that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Daniel Hartley

INSPECTOR