

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2016

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/16/3154847

13 Randall Place, Greenwich, SE10 9LA

- 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 Lap Hin against the decision of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/0190/F, dated 21 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension to an existing Victorian Cottage incorporating the infill of an existing side return to previous outrigger extension and the addition of bathroom facilities at first floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: (i) The effect of the rear extension on the character and appearance of the terrace and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Greenwich Conservation Area, and; (ii) The effect of the rear extension on the living conditions of occupiers of 11 Randall Place, having particular regard to matters of outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. 13 Randall Place is one property in a curved terrace of two storey traditional cottages, which is locally listed. The terrace is substantially intact as noted in the West Greenwich Conservation Area Appraisal (2013) and as such makes a valuable contribution to the West Greenwich Conservation Area (CA) in which it is located. To the rear of the property is a single storey rear projection with pitched roof. This spans across part of the appeal property and the adjoining neighbour, 11 Randal Place, leaving space either side. This is repeated across the terrace creating a pattern of regular gaps between the properties which provides interest to the rear elevation of the terrace.
 4. Views of the rear of the terrace are generally screened from public view, but private views are possible. The largely unaltered rear elevations of these terrace properties with their traditional appearance and pleasing uniformity contributes positively to the historic character and appearance of the CA. Although the single storey rear projections might be later additions to the
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terrace they are clearly of some age and appear to have been built at the same time as each other, hence their general uniformity.

5. The proposal is for a new single storey rear extension with a smaller first floor extension above. The single storey element of the proposal would extend across the entire width of the rear elevation of the property. It would also extend further into the rear garden. As a result it would completely subsume the ground floor and would appear as an overly dominant addition on what is a relatively modest sized plot. The space to the side of the original single storey rear projection would also be lost thereby eroding the uniformity which currently exists across the rear of the terrace. Consequently the single storey rear extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of terrace and the CA.
6. I note the appellant's comment that there are examples of deeper single storey rear extensions along the terrace. The majority are not visible from the rear of the appeal property given the curve in the road. In any event, these do not justify the proposal given the harm I have found.
7. Whilst each appeal must be treated on its individual merits, I can also appreciate the Council's concern that approval of this proposal could be used in support of similar schemes across the terrace given the similarity between these properties; the cumulative effect of which would exacerbate the harm I have described above.
8. In coming to the above findings, I find limited harm with respect to the first floor extension. This would be of restricted proportions, set below the eaves of the property, and would therefore not dominate the first floor of the rear elevation. Its design, although contemporary, would loosely follow the pattern of existing fenestration at first floor. There is also an example of a very modest first floor extension over a single storey rear projection on the end terrace closest to the appeal property. In principle, therefore, I consider that a first floor extension of this scale and design would not, in itself be harmful. This does not, however, override my concerns outlined above with respect to the size of the ground floor rear extension.
9. For these reasons the proposed rear extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the terrace and would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As such it conflicts with Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2015), and DH1, DH3, DH(a), DH(h) and DH(j) of the adopted Royal Greenwich Local Plan, Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (CS). Amongst other things, these require development to be of a high quality of design, which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas, and protects and conserves locally listed buildings.
10. Although harmful to its immediate surroundings, in terms of the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) paragraph 134, the harm to the CA would be 'less than substantial'. However, it would still represent a harmful impact, adversely affecting the CA's significance as a heritage asset. As per paragraph 134 of the Framework less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal. The proposal includes replacing existing front uPVC windows with replica double hung timber sash windows, and a replacement timber door, both of which would be of benefit to the appearance of the CA. I also note the appellant's comments that the

existing single storey rear projection is cramped, suffers from damp, and is not suited to modern living. Such improvements could, however, be made without resulting in the harm I have found. Consequently they do not outweigh the harm to the CA.

Living Conditions

11. The Council raises concern over the close proximity of the first floor rear extension to the neighbouring property stating that this would have an adverse impact on outlook for its occupiers. Part of the first floor extension might be visible from the nearest window at 11 Randall Place but, given the restricted size of this element of the proposal, the window at No 11 would, nevertheless, retain a largely open outlook. I therefore find limited harm in this regard.
12. The Council's second reason for refusal also suggests that the proposal would result in a loss of daylight and sunlight to the occupiers of No 11 but have put forward no robust evidence with respect to this. Given the northerly aspect of the rear of the property, I find no material harm in terms of a loss of light. I therefore find no conflict with Policy DH(b) of the CS which seeks to protect the amenity of adjacent occupiers.

Conclusion

13. Whilst I find no harm to the living conditions of occupiers of 11 Randall Place the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the locally listed terrace to which the appeal property belongs, and consequently would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the West Greenwich Conservation Area. Therefore, having had regard to all matters raised, including that the extension would be of high quality construction using sustainable materials, the appeal is, nevertheless, dismissed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR