

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 September 2016

by Alexander Walker MPlan MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/16/3152491

43 Point Hill, London SE10 8QW

- 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 Jeremy and Mrs Jodie Podger against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 15/1867/F, dated 10 June 2015, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is a new part 2 storey, part 3 storey (at rear) detached, 3 bedroom dwelling in the side garden of a corner plot.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are whether the dwelling would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Greenwich Conservation Area and its effect on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is located within the West Greenwich Conservation Area (CA). This part of the CA is characterised by the variety of properties ranging from 18th to 20th century. The properties are generally terraced and front onto the street and are interspersed in places by green spaces.
 4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out matters which should be taken into account including sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. It further advises at paragraph 132 that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
 5. The appeal site lies adjacent to a row of four terraced properties. The terrace row is stepped, with each property rising slightly above the last, reflecting the steep incline of this section of Point Hill, which rises from north to south. This
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stepped design is highlighted by the regularity of the stepped ridgeline, eaves and banding. Although there are differences in terms of their render colour and the size and design of each of the dormer extensions, the existing properties appear to have retained their original form. They have small gardens to the front, enclosed by similar metal railings. Overall, they form an attractive feature, particularly when approaching along Maidenstone Hill from the west and make a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.

6. The proposed dwelling would have a number of features that would reflect the neighbouring terraced properties, including the brick/render finish and front dormer. Although it would be detached, due to its similar design features and proximity, it would be read as an addition to the terraced row. However, it would be lower in height than No 35 Point Hill resulting in the entrance being below street level, accessed by steps. Furthermore, it would be wider and therefore the solid to void ratio would not be in-keeping with the neighbouring properties. Overall, it would disrupt the existing rhythm of the uniform design and regularity of the terraced row, which would significantly harm its character and appearance. I appreciate that the proposal has been so designed in order to appear subordinate to the existing properties. However, in doing so, it would appear squat and incongruous in the streetscene and fail to respect the existing pattern of development. Consequently, it would diminish the significance of the CA.
7. I have had regard to the Council's concern in respect of the dwelling representing an overdevelopment of the site. Whilst there would be a reduction in the size of the garden associated with No 43 Point Hill, due to its extensive size, there would be sufficient garden space retained to ensure that the site would not appear overdeveloped. Furthermore, although the garden for the proposed dwelling would be shorter in depth than the neighbouring properties, it would not be so significant to have any significant harm on the existing pattern of development.
8. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') confirms that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimal viable use. Whilst the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial, there is no public benefit identified that would outweigh this harm.
9. I find therefore that the dwelling would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As such, it would be contrary to DH1, DH3, DH4 and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (CS) 2014, which seek to ensure that development is of a high quality of design and protects and enhances heritage assets. It would also fail to accord with Policies 7.4, 7.6, 7.8 and 7.10 of the London Plan 2015, which similarly seek to ensure development is of a high quality design and should conserve the significance of heritage assets.

Highway Safety

10. The proposal does not include for any on-site parking. Therefore any parking demand as a result of the dwelling would be met by on-street parking. The appeal site has a PTAL of 3 and therefore has a moderate level of access to

public transport. The London Plan requires a maximum of 1.5 spaces for 3 bedroom dwellings.

11. During my site visit I observed a number of vacant on-street parking spaces within the vicinity of the site, in particular to the south along Point Hill. I appreciate that this was a snap-shot in time and is not fully representative of the parking conditions throughout the day, as indicated by the number of objections from local residents. Nevertheless, given that the proposal is for a single, three bedroom dwelling, I consider that any increase in parking could be satisfactorily accommodated on-street without any severe harm to highway safety.
12. Furthermore, due to the sites access to public transport and with it being within reasonable walking distance of shops and facilities, there would not be a necessity for occupants of the development to use a private car.
13. I find therefore that the proposal would not severely harm highway safety and as such it would comply with Policy 6.13 of the London Plan 2015 and Policy IM(c) of the CS, which state that the maximum parking standards of the London Plan should be the basis for considering planning applications.

Other Matters

14. I have had regard to the concerns raised regarding the effect of the development on the nearby listed building. However, I am satisfied that based on the evidence before me, the proposed dwelling would not harm the building or its setting.
15. I have also had regard to the effect of the development on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring residential properties. Given the distances between the properties and the orientation of the building, I am satisfied that there would not be any significantly harmful effect with regard to this matter.
16. I also appreciate the apprehension expressed by local residents with regard to land instability. However, there is no substantive evidence before me that the proposal would result in land instability or adversely affect the structural integrity of neighbouring properties.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR