

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2016

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DMS DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/16/3153359

Flat 2, 179A Merton Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 5EF

- 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 Nasir Obaidullah against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2015/5803, dated 8 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2015.
 - The development proposed is extension to second-floor rear storey extension to existing rear roof to create one bedroom unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the original planning refusal, the Council's policy review has led to the adoption of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) in March 2016. This decision is therefore based on the policies of this currently adopted plan.

Main Issues

3. The effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to outlook, and on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. The proposal relates to a second-floor attic studio flat within a terrace of properties with ground floor commercial frontages. The flat is accessed at the rear from Coliston Passage, via an external staircase reached through a narrow alley between dwellings created by the conversion of the rear outbuildings to Nos 177 and 179. At the site visit it was seen that new housing, sited hard up to the opposite side of Coliston Passage, was nearing completion and that many of the other Merton Road properties had roof dormer and two-storey rear extensions and converted rear coach house buildings, making for an area of compact, high density accommodation.
 5. The proposed extension would replace the existing dormer with a larger one, filling the full width of the roof, and extend out to provide an additional room above an existing first-floor flat. As a result, the side windows to the accommodation in the rear extension of No 177 would view a raised expanse of
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blank wall. This would have an overbearing impact on the outlook from these rooms and detract from the living conditions for these occupiers. The existing flats to the rear of Nos 177 and 179 already have a very confined outlook which the addition of a further storey above the rear extension to this property would exacerbate, creating an even greater sense of enclosure. The proposed extension would also have an overbearing impact on the outlook from the rear windows of the second-floor accommodation at No 181 and cause harm to the living conditions for these occupiers as well.

6. This proposal would therefore conflict with the general principles in DMPD Policy DMS1 for development to result in no harm to the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties due to an overbearing, unsatisfactory outlook.

Character and appearance

7. The Council has referred to an earlier scheme at No 179, similar to this proposal, which was recently the subject of an unsuccessful appeal¹. This previous appeal decision is a material consideration. Compared to this earlier appeal proposal, this addition would be fractionally smaller and faced in artificial slates rather than brickwork, which would differentiate and lessen the visual impact of its additional mass.
8. Consideration has also been given to the various other rear additions along this terrace and in the general area, including those referred to by the appellant at Nos 171, 173, 177 and 185. Plans submitted of the rear extensions approved at No 185 have been examined. Although many of these existing two-storey rear additions extend above the eaves-level of the main houses, such as at Nos 177 and 185, none appear to do so to the same extent of around 2 metres proposed in this scheme. Whilst this terrace does exhibit a number of precedents for two-storey rear additions this proposal should be assessed on its own merits. Notwithstanding the slightly reduced scale and changed facing materials from the previous appeal scheme, this second floor addition would still be sited significantly above the eaves height of the main building and be a substantial addition.
9. The scale, massing and appearance of this extension would conflict with the general principles in the DMPD Policy DMS1 by failing to provide the high quality design that would contribute positively to local spatial character. The proposal would conflict with DMPD Policy DMH5, and with the guidance in the Housing Supplementary Planning Document², by dominating and competing with the original building and by being visually intrusive and harming the appearance of the street scene along Coliston Passage.

Conclusion

10. This proposal would harm both the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, due to having an overbearing impact, and the character and appearance of this area, due to its scale and prominence. Having taken into consideration all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/H5960/A/13/2201862

² Wandsworth Local Plan – Housing Supplementary Planning Document adopted July 2015.