

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2016

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/16/3153100

18 Coopers Lane, 12 Pragnell Road, London SE12 0QA

- 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 D Dirrane against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/16/095586, dated 19 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and upon the host buildings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of a pair of semi-detached houses located on the inside corner of the junction of Coopers Lane and Pragnell Road. Elevated slightly above road level, and set on the diagonal in relation to both roadside plot frontages, the pair of dwellings occupy a prominent position in the context of the adjacent streets. Along with similar pairs of dwellings on the opposite corner of this junction, and at the junctions of Kingsand Road and Pragnell Road, Kingsand Road and Burnt Ash Hill and Coopers Lane and Burnt Ash Road, the appeal properties mark a clear point of transition into a residential area of distinctive dwellings with a generally consistent form, design, appearance and character.
 4. Due to a general fall in ground levels across the site towards the lower level of Pragnell Road, the ground floor of 12 Pragnell Road sits above the surrounding external garden ground levels. Although the building sits in a prominent and slightly elevated position when viewed from Coopers Lane from the south and south-east, the "cat-slide" style roof and essentially single storey nature of the existing flank elevation ensure that No 12 sits discretely within the Pragnell Road streetscene.
 5. However, the proposed alterations would replace the modest flank elevations with a deeper and much more substantial two storey elevation, particularly in the case of No 12. The flank elevation would extend, unbroken except for a door and windows, along its entire length from front to rear, its bulk and mass exacerbated by the higher ground floor level of the existing dwelling and its
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prominent, open aspect on the inside of the junction. The position of the houses at the junction of the two roads, and the long and open street frontage around No 12 particularly, are such that the scale of the resulting flank elevation would result in a jarring and incongruous feature within the Pragnell Road streetscene, at odds with the built form of adjacent dwellings.

6. I acknowledge that there are a wide variety of designs and scales of extensions within the adjacent streets. I have also had regard to the example of a similar extension cited at 13 Pragnell Road. Although only relating to one half of the pair of semi-detached properties, it is, the appellant claims, otherwise largely identical to that proposed at 18 Coopers Lane and 12 Pragnell Road. That may be so, but its siting, in the middle of the row of semi-detached dwellings, reduces its relative prominence within the streetscene and, as a consequence, is less sensitive to change than the more open and prominent position of the appeal building.
7. I acknowledge too, that the proposed extensions and alterations to the two appeal properties would reinstate a sense of symmetry to this pair of dwellings that would originally have been evident here, and on properties in the adjacent streets. So too, unlike the previous appeal proposal¹ to which both parties have referred, would the proposal retain, and retain the prominence of, distinctive features of the wider area, such as the paired projecting ground floor bays with tiled roof above; the individual curved first floor bay windows on the front elevation; the pitched tiled roof leading into a tile-hung gable peak above and the chimneys, all of which are defining characteristics of the appeal property and the adjacent streets.
8. These factors are not sufficient, however, to overcome the harm caused by the bulk of the proposed extensions, and particularly the jarring and incongruous nature of the proposed flank elevation of No 12 in relation to the Pragnell Road streetscene. For this reason, I find that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to the design aims of the Lewisham Local Development Framework Core Strategy (the CS, 2011) Policy 15 and DM Policies 30 and 31 of the Lewisham Local Development Framework Development Management Local Plan (the DMLP, 2014). Together, these policies seek to ensure high quality design for Lewisham by ensuring an adequate response to how proposals relate to the scale and alignment of the street and its building frontages, and by avoiding proposals that would have an incongruous, dominant or visually obtrusive impact on the streetscene. The proposal would also be at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks high quality design and to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out, and having regard to all other matters raised, including the lack of objection in respect of the impact of the proposal upon living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/C5690/W/15/3078134