

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by Alexander Walker MPlan MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23rd November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/16/3156296

86 Sladedale Road, Plumstead Common, London SE18 1PX

- 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 Gurmit Singh Sodhi against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 15/3737/F, dated 10 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 5 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2 storey side extension to form separate single family dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In their reasons for refusal, the Council refer to the proposal as a 'rear extension'. However, the description in the application is a 'side extension' and the plans submitted with it clearly indicate as such. Accordingly, I have determined the application on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Plumstead Common Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is situated within the Plumstead Common Conservation Area (CA). This part of the extensive CA generally comprises mid-19th century two-storey, terraced housing that lies adjacent to Plumstead Common. The housing is of an attractive, generally consistent design with ground floor bay windows to the front and follows uniform building lines.
 5. 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
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development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

6. No 86 Sladedale Road is the only property on Sladedale Road that falls within the CA. The property is an end-terrace. Due to the topography of the area, with the land falling sharply from east to west, it is two-storey to the front and three-storey to the rear. Furthermore, properties in the terrace are stepped, with each property rising slightly above the last reflecting the steep incline of this section of Sladedale Road, which rises from north to south. This stepped design is highlighted by the regularity of the stepped eaves.
7. The property has a single-storey flat roof extension to the side, which forms part of a flat - No 86a Sladedale Road. In addition, the garden area to the south comprises a large paved terraced area. Adjacent to the southern boundary of the property is The Slade, which is a large open space that forms part of the overall Plumstead Common. Due to a high retaining wall on the eastern boundary of the site, which abuts the adjacent road, and the significant difference in ground levels, much of the terrace garden and extension is screened from view.
8. The wide gap between No 86 and the properties fronting Lakedale Road makes a positive contribution to the openness of the area and provides views of the open skyline. The proposed dwelling would occupy much of this open space, therefore diminishing the overall openness of the area and open vistas. The boundary wall with the road is of limited architectural merit. However, it does provide an important demarcation of the open gap. Consequently, the loss of a section of the wall would only further exacerbate the harm to the openness of the area.
9. The dwelling would be situated on top of the existing single-storey extension. Whilst it would adjoin the existing property and is described as an extension, the proposal would be clearly read as a separate dwelling and not an addition to the existing dwelling. Although its design would be informed by the existing property, its lower ridgeline would fail to respect the prevailing stepped roofscape of the terrace. Furthermore, the dwelling would be set back behind the existing forward building line of the terrace. Whilst I appreciate that these features would provide a subservient relationship between the proposed and existing dwellings, in this instance it would only highlight its incongruity within the streetscene and its failure to respect the existing built-form and pattern of development. Overall, I find that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the CA.
10. I have had regard to the appellant's submission that the dwelling would enhance the CA by building on top of the existing flat roof extension. However, the existing extension is situated significantly lower than the road. Whilst the existing extension's architectural merits are limited, the proposal would have a significantly greater effect on the openness of the area to the detriment of the character and appearance of the CA.
11. 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 use¹. Although the overall harm to the significance of the CA would be less

¹ Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework

then substantial, there is no public benefit identified that would outweigh this harm.

12. I find therefore that the dwelling would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. As such, it would fail to comply with Policies DH1, DH3 and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014, which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development is of a high quality of design and protects and enhances heritage assets, in particular, Conservation Areas. Furthermore, it would fail to accord with Policies 7.4 and 7.8 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.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge the apprehension from local residents regarding the potential effect of the development on their living conditions, with regard to loss of privacy, outlook and daylight. However, I am satisfied that there would be adequate separation distances between properties to ensure that there would not be any significant harm in this respect. Furthermore, there is no substantive evidence before me that the proposal would lead to any land instability.

Conclusion

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

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR