

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: 29 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/D/16/3158584
19 Senrab Street, Mile End, London E1 0QE

- 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 and Mrs E Skinner against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/15/03171, dated 2 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 23 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a roof conversion and dormer to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. At the time of my site visit the dormer extension had already been erected. As such, the proposal seeks to retain the dormer extension. Accordingly, I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Albert Gardens Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located within the Albert Gardens Conservation Area (CA). The CA, which was designated in 1969 and extended in 2008, covers a wide area and is characterised by nineteenth-century terraces. The Albert Gardens Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines document states that the CA incorporates a number of delightful terraces, whose uniformity is part of their success.
 5. The appeal property comprises a mid-terrace, two-storey dwelling with accommodation in the roof facilitated by a dormer extension on the rear, which is the subject of this appeal. The roof of the terrace is pitched with parapets demarcating property boundaries. Whilst much of the rear roofscape is not open to public views, it is visible from private views from the rear gardens of the terrace and from the rear of properties fronting onto Dunelm Street. Overall, the uniformity of the terrace, including both its front and rear elevations, and its largely unaltered form make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
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6. The dormer extension is on the rear of the property. Views of it from public vantage points are very limited. Therefore, its overall effect on the streetscene is negligible. Nevertheless, private views also contribute towards the character and appearance of an area. In this instance, the largely unaltered roofscape is characteristic of the uniformity of the terrace and the overall CA. Due to its mid-terrace position, the dormer extension unacceptably disrupts the rhythm of the roofscape. Consequently, it appears as an incongruous addition to the roofscape that detracts from the character and appearance of the terrace and the overall CA.
7. I acknowledge that No 1 Senrab Street has a similar rear dormer extension. However, it is at the end of the terrace and therefore does not disrupt the rhythm to the same extent. Furthermore, I note that there are dormer extensions on the rear of properties on the opposite side of Senrab Street. However, notwithstanding the lack of details concerning the planning history of these extensions, they form part of a different roofscape which does not have the same characteristic uninterrupted rhythm and therefore I cannot draw any direct comparison with the appeal proposal. In any event, I have considered the proposal based on its own merits.
8. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') states 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. Paragraph 134 of 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, I find that the proposal offers no public benefit.
9. I note that in their reason for refusal the Council also raise concern regarding the materials used. However, whilst the materials match the original roof, this does not outweigh the harm the overall form of the extension has on the character and appearance of the CA.
10. I find therefore that the extension would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Albert Gardens Conservation Area. As such, it is contrary to Policies SP10 and SP12 of the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2025, which, amongst other matters, seek to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas and retain and respect the features that contribute to each places' heritage, character and local distinctiveness. In addition, it fails to comply with Policies DM24 and DM27 of the Tower Hamlets Managing Development Development Plan Document, which state that development should enhance the local character, taking account of roof lines, and does not result in an adverse impact on the character of a heritage asset. It would also fail to comply with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2015, which seek to ensure that development is informed by the surrounding historic environment. Furthermore, it would fail to accord with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

11. I appreciate the appellant's concerns regarding the advice given to them prior to carrying out the works and the Council's delay in determining the application. However, these matters do not have any bearing on my consideration of the planning merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

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

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR