
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2016

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/16/3157701
175 Westcombe Hill, London SE3 7DP

- 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 Ms Georgia Blundell against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 16/0258/F, dated 29 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is the replacement of an existing single rear dormer in the existing loft.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the replacement of an existing single rear dormer in the existing loft at 175 Westcombe Hill, London SE3 7DP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/0258/F, dated 29 January 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and whether the character or appearance of the Westcombe Park Conservation Area (CA), in which the appeal property is located, would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, a late Victorian semi-detached dwelling, stands on Westcombe Hill, a busy thoroughfare. The house is in need of repair and restoration, and the process has begun. In this regard, I saw that works had started internally and on the front elevation, where the uncharacteristic Canterbury Spar render had been removed, revealing the attractive original brickwork. Decorative features had also been refurbished or restored.
 4. A small pitch-roofed dormer occupies part of the main roof at the rear. This type of dormer is not an uncharacteristic element of the rear roof profile of the street, and those down the hill from the appeal property are clearly seen from Siebert Road. More modern, flat roofed box-like dormer extensions are seen in the rear roofs of properties up the hill, but these are not particularly well-designed or attractive.
 5. The appellant has revised the original proposals and now intends replacing the single dormer with two of a similar style, but which would be linked with a tiled
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insert. The Council objects since it is considered that the property, as a result, would have a 'top-heavy' and 'distorted' appearance, and the outcome, in the Council's view would be an 'over-powering' of the original building, harming the appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

6. To my mind, however, the shape and form of the main elements of the proposed dormer extension reflect that of the extant dormer and would be acceptable. The proposal's scale would be modest and entirely proportionate to that of the roof. If the tiles used in the insert matched those of the main roof, as intended, the development would fit in acceptably and not appear discordant. Thus in terms of the impact on the host property, I find the proposal's design to be entirely acceptable.
7. Moreover, the development would not be prominent in the wider scene. On the contrary, the dormer could not be seen from the front and would be effectively screened in views from Siebert Road by a group of trees, including evergreens, and by the roof of the appeal property's rear protrusion.
8. The dormer could be seen from some nearby gardens and from within the adjacent school, but its large, modern buildings dominate its surroundings and adjoining gardens. In this context, the proposal, if built, would be barely noticeable and would have little or no visual impact, and certainly none that could be reasonably considered as harmful.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or its surroundings and that the character and appearance of the CA would thus be preserved.
10. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those requirements of policies DH1, DH(a), DH(h) & DH3 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy (CS) that provide, in combination, that development proposals should be of a high quality of design and of a scale and design appropriate to the building and locality, and that the character or appearance of the Borough's conservation areas should be preserved.

Conditions

11. The Council's suggested condition relating to materials shall be imposed, in the interests of visual amenity, albeit slightly modified.
12. It is also necessary in the interests of certainty that the development is built in accordance with the approved plans, and a condition to this effect is imposed.

Other matters

13. Reference has been made to other development plan policies, but those to which I have referred are considered the most relevant, taking account of the thrust of the Council's sole reason for refusal.
14. The references made to the *National Planning Policy Framework*, the Council's Planning Guidance for Home Extensions (2004) and the Council's recently adopted guidance entitled 'Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance - Supplementary Planning Document' have been taken into consideration.
15. Whilst listed in the officer's report and mentioned in the sole reason for refusal, no specific reference is otherwise made to the CA's character appraisal. In

particular, no reliance is apparently placed on its content within the Council's assessment of the proposal.

16. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account, but no other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. The tiled materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing roof.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: The location plan and Drawings Nos. PP-00; PP-01; PP-02; PP-03; PP-04; PP-05; PP-06; PP-07 Rev A; PP-08 Rev A; PP-09 Rev A & PP-10.