The Planning Inspectorate

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/16/3160203
10 Westcombe Park Road, Blackheath, London SE3 7RB

- 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 Mrs Angela East against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
- The application Ref 16/1311/F, dated 25 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2016.
- The development proposed is a new lead clad dormer to rear facing roof slope.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's officer report on the original application and the sole reason for refusal refer to the appeal property as being located within the Blackheath Conservation Area. The Council has since confirmed that, in fact, the appeal dwelling lies within the adjacent conservation area, the Greenwich Park Conservation Area (CA).

Main issues

3. 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 CA would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

Character & appearance

4. The appeal property is set within an attractive terrace of dwellings. Whilst the front elevations of properties along this frontage appear to be relatively unchanged, the same could not be said of their rears. In this regard, several properties have been extended and modified. Moreover, dormers have been inserted in the roofs of other properties, notably Nos. 14, 18 & 20. The appeal property displays 2 dormers of its own, whilst Nos. 4 & 6, the semi-detached dwellings to the west of the terrace, also have dormers in their roofs.

5. Thus, as the appellant rightly contends, dormers are not an uncharacteristic feature in the locality, and some have been granted planning permission by the Council. There is therefore no good reason, in the appellant's view, why this proposal should have been refused permission.

6. The appellant intends replacing the two existing dormers with what amounts, in my view, to a dormer roof extension. It would have a lengthy flat roof, built at the same level below the ridge as the existing dormers. However, it would be set far deeper in the host property's roof, closer to the eaves, than the existing dormers, and consequently the dormer's roof would be about a metre wider than is currently the case. The dormer would also extend laterally, albeit slightly, beyond the existing dormers towards the chimneys either side, and the space between the extant dormers would be effectively in-filled. The dormer's vertical face would be sufficiently high to accommodate a set of glazed full-sized, bi-fold doors with a Juliette balcony, with room to spare.

7. To my mind, the dwelling's roof would be completely transformed by the proposal, which would resemble the shape of a large rectangular box, albeit punctuated by glazed openings. By reason of its bulk and scale the proposal would appear disproportionate, unacceptably dominating the roof and materially affecting and harming the visual integrity of the host property.

8. Moreover, the dormer extension would be very noticeable from a section of Maze Hill, which runs along the walled boundary of Greenwich Park. Viewed from here, particularly when defoliation has occurred, the proposal, if built, would prove very prominent. Because of its shape, excessive size and bulk it would stand out as being visually unappealing, thus harming the appearance of the CA.

9. The proposal could not realistically, or indeed be favourably compared with the other dormers in the roofs of neighbouring properties either in terms of its effect on the host property or wider area. It would be larger and bulkier than the others that I saw, and would be closer to Maze Hill and thus more prominent in the public realm than those at Nos. 14, 18 & 20. The dormers in the rear roofs of Nos. 4 & 6 are closer to Maze Hill than the appeal dwelling, but these are clearly distinguishable from the appeal proposal in that they are far more proportionately and modestly scaled in the context of a larger roof.

10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the visual integrity of the host property and the surrounding area so that the character and appearance of the CA would neither be preserved nor enhanced. Accordingly, a clear 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.

Other matters

11. 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 Council's sole reason for refusal.

12. The appellant, and indeed the Council have referred to the document entitled 'Planning Guidance for Home Extensions', published in 2004. However, the Council has recently adopted new guidance entitled 'Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance - Supplementary Planning Document', based largely on policies contained within the CS. The proposed development

would not, to my mind, be in accord with this more modern and up-to-date design guidance on roof or dormer extensions.

13. I acknowledge that the type of design proposed would prove advantageous and convenient to the appellant both in terms of internal movement and useable additional accommodation, but this does not outweigh the harm I have found.

14. All other matters raised in the representations have also been taken into account, including the appellant's references to what she regards as other similar developments in the locality, but no other matter is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR