
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2016

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/D/16/3159459

100 Cobourg Road, London SE5 0JB

- 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 M Booth against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref 16/AP/2798, dated 9 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as an L shape dormer loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a dormer extension to the main rear roof slope and installation of two roof lights to the front roof slope at 100 Cobourg Road, London SE5 0JB in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/AP/2798, dated 9 May 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Procedural matters

2. The description of development set out in the above heading is taken from the application form. However, Part E of the planning appeal form, which was completed by the appellant, indicates that the description of development has been changed and a different wording has been entered. The planning appeal form refers to the proposal as the erection of a dormer extension to the main rear roof slope and installation of two roof lights to the front roof slope. From the Officer's report, the Council dealt with the proposal on that basis and therefore so shall I. As this revised description more accurately reflects the development sought, I have used it in my decision. I am satisfied that no interests would be prejudiced as a result.
3. I have dealt with another appeal¹ on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.

Main issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

¹ Ref APP/A5840/D/16/3159458

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a 2-storey house of traditional style that forms part of a short terrace within the Cobourg Road Conservation Area (CA). While existing development along Cobourg Road is mainly residential, with roofs largely unaltered, there is some variety in building types and styles. It is the variety in existing built form that is a distinctive feature of the wider CA, which positively contributes to the character of this designated heritage asset. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
6. A dormer extension would be placed onto the main rear roof slope of No 100 with a new rear-facing window. The new addition would result in a significant change to the appearance of the existing dwelling at the rear. Nevertheless, the extension would be modest in size and set in from the main roof on all four sides. With adequate space around the proposal, it would appear proportionate to the host building taking into account the pitch of the roof. External materials would match the existing dwelling and the size and position of the new opening would be in keeping with the pattern of fenestration in the rear façade. Therefore, the design, scale and appearance of the new dormer would be acceptable. As a result, the intrinsic character of the host building would be maintained with the new built form in place.
7. Views of the new dormer from the adjacent roads would be limited given its position set down from the main ridge at the back of the property and the screening provided by existing buildings. Only the very top of the new dormer would be visible from Loncroft Road through a narrow gap between adjacent terraces. A small part of the proposal may also be evident from Cobourg Road. In both cases, such views would be at an upward oblique angle and would not draw the eye given the modest amount of the new dormer that would be seen and the varied built context within which it would be visually 'read'. As a result, the appeal scheme would have no significant effect on the character and qualities of the local street scene or the sense that roofs to properties are generally unaltered. For the same reason, the setting of the church on the opposite side of Cobourg Road to the site, which is a Grade II listed building, would be preserved.
8. The proposed extension would be evident from various public vantage points within Burgess Park, beyond the rear of No 100. From these locations, the new addition would be seen from some distance with a large school building to one side and a substantial residential terrace facing Loncroft Road on the other. With varied built form effectively framing those views, and given the use of tiles to match the host roof, the proposal would not draw the eye as it would appear compatible in its context.
9. By extending and altering part of the rear roof to the host terrace, which appears to be largely unaltered, the new dormer would change its appearance. However, having carefully viewed the host terrace on all four sides, it is difficult to fully experience and appreciate the full expanse of the rear roof from a single location because existing buildings and boundary features partly obscure it. Consequently, the Council overstates the contribution of the unaltered roof of the terrace in establishing a distinctive feature and a rhythm within the area. To my mind, it is primarily the consistent design and pattern of fenestration in

the front façade of the host terrace that establishes a unity and regular pattern in the street scene, which would be unaffected by the new dormer.

10. The rear gardens between the properties on Cobourg Road and Loncroft Road are small and this, combined with the screening provided by boundary features, would mean that upward views from any one garden towards the roof of No 100 would be very limited. Other properties in the CA include dormers, albeit different in size, style and position to that proposed, without detriment to the character or quality of the CA. Thus, I am not persuaded that the proposal would be obtrusive or necessarily an uncharacteristic addition in principle.
11. The Council appears to raise no objection to the proposed roof lights. I, too, find these elements of the appeal scheme acceptable given their modest size, appropriate design and high level position on the front roof slope. In views from Cobourg Road, the new roof lights would be inconspicuous and would not look out of place among the varied built form in the streetscape.
12. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not materially harm to the character and appearance of the local area. The character and appearance of the CA would be preserved. Accordingly, there is no conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.8 of The London Plan, Strategic Policy 12 of the Council's Core Strategy or Policies 3.12, 3.13 and 3.16 of the Southwark Plan. These policies aim to ensure that development takes into account the principles of good urban design and, within conservation areas, preserves or enhances their character and appearance. The proposal would also adhere to the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework for development to achieve a high quality design and to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
13. The Council raises additional concern that the proposal, if permitted, would set an undesirable precedent. However, I disagree. Each case should be considered on its own merits, as I have done in this instance.
14. I have also had regard to the various schemes that include roof level extensions to which both main parties have referred. Few background details of these developments have been provided, which all appear to differ to the design and scale of the proposal before me. Therefore, I am unable to draw any meaningful conclusions from them and so attach limited weight to these examples for the purpose of this appeal.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings and to require that the development be carried out in accordance with them as this provides certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, a condition is attached to require that the external materials match those of the existing building.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

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100 Cobourg Road, London SE5 0JB

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs ST_MAY16_100COB_001 Rev D and the H.M. Land Registry Plan, which shows the site edged red.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.