

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2016

by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21st December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/16/3159928

80 Lambton Road, Raynes Park, London, SW20 0LP

- 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 Sophie Sanadi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 16/P3185, dated 5 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a (reduced) rear roof extension with 2 rooflights and 3 dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Lambton Road Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a Victorian end-of-terrace dwelling, which is situated in a prominent position on the corner of Lambton Road and Rosevine Road. It is located within the CA which, in the vicinity of the appeal site, is characterised by rows of period terraced properties. Many of these (including the appeal property) have been altered and extended at roof level. These extensions include flat-roofed dormers and mansard-style structures, of which many are in visually prominent positions. The appeal property itself has two pitched roof dormer windows on the rear roof slope to facilitate living accommodation in the roofspace.
 4. I note that the Lambton Road Character Assessment 2005, states that the properties at 40-142 Lambton Road make a positive contribution to the CA. It also refers to "unsightly box-like rear roof additions" on properties within the CA, including on buildings along sections of Lambton Road.
 5. The proposal is to construct a slate clad mansard-style roof extension, which would replace the existing dormer windows, in order to provide increased space on the second floor of the property. A previous proposal to construct a wider mansard roof was refused by the Council in 2015. A subsequent appeal was
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dismissed on 4 March 2016 (APP/T5720/D/15/33140167). The current proposal would be similar to a mansard roof extension that has been built nearby at number 51 Tolverne Road. I viewed that extension during my site visit.

6. There is a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This duty is reflected in Policy DM4 of the Council's adopted Sites and Policies Plan 2014 (SPP), as it is in Policy CS14 of the adopted Core Planning Strategy 2011 (CS), although this is not stated in the Council's decision notice. The requirement is also reaffirmed in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Paragraph 132 of 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.
7. Furthermore, Policies DM2 and DM3 of the SPP and Policy CS14 of the CS seek to ensure that all development is of high quality design. Policy DM3 of the SPP also states that dormer windows should be of a size and design that respect the character and proportions of the original building and surrounding context. Further guidance on the size and design of roof extensions is contained in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance – Residential Extensions, Alterations and Conversions 2001 (SPG). In addition, the Council's Lambton Road Design Guide states that large projections beyond the roof slope or other major modifications of the original roof form will be resisted.
8. I acknowledge the existence of other rear roof extensions in the vicinity of the appeal site, including some on other properties in the same terrace. I am also informed that planning permission has been granted for a roof extension at number 78 Lambton Road. In that regard, the Council appears to have been inconsistent in its approach to these developments. However, I am required to deal with the proposal on its individual merits.
9. The proposed dormer extension would be set-in from the side wall of the dwelling (and it therefore differs from the previous proposal, as referred to above). However, I consider that it would still appear as a dominant, bulky and incongruous addition to the property because of its scale and mass. It would be highly visible in the streetscene and, in my opinion it would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling. The proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Consequently, it would conflict with the Development Plan and with the provisions of the Framework, as referred to above.
10. I consider that the harm that I have identified would be 'less than substantial' in the context of paragraph 134 of the Framework. Accordingly, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I acknowledge that the proposal would benefit the appellant through the creation of extra accommodation in order to improve the living conditions of the occupiers. However, I am not persuaded that this outweighs the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR