

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2016

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 03 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/D/16/3158902
77 Ivydale Road, London SE15 3DS

- 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 Richie Atkinson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref 16/AP/2499, dated 18 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a loft conversion using a rear 'L' shaped dormer extension plus two roof lights to the front roof slope to provide additional residential accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a loft conversion using a rear 'L' shaped dormer extension plus two roof lights to the front roof slope to provide additional residential accommodation at 77 Ivydale Road, London SE15 3DS in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/AP/2499, dated 18 June 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by the appellant against the Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey dwelling in a long residential terrace that lies within a mixed residential area. The appeal dwelling and the terrace to which it belongs are not listed nor is the site within a conservation area.
 5. The proposal is to increase the ridge height of No 77 by extending the existing front roof slope upwards at the same angle by about 0.26-metres. A split-level 'L' shaped dormer extension would also be erected on the rear roof slopes of the existing dwelling with 2 roof lights inserted onto the main front roof slope.
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6. The new ridgeline would be higher than, but set back from, that of the attached property to one side of No 77, which is 75 Ivydale Road. At street level in front of the site, this arrangement would ensure that the new ridge would appear to closely align with that of No 75 given the upward angle of view. From Ivydale Road on the approach to the site in both directions, it would be difficult to detect a significant difference in height and position of the ridgelines between Nos 75 and 77, as proposed, because the raised party wall that divides the front roof slopes of these properties would continue to separate and partly obscure them. Consequently, the relationship between Nos 75 and 77 as a 'mirrored' pair in the same terrace would remain intact in the streetscape.
7. The ridgeline of 79 Ivydale Road on the other side of No 77 is lower than that of No 77, which would become more pronounced as a result of the proposal. Nevertheless, Nos 77 and 79 clearly differ in style and age and so a greater gap between their respective ridgelines would not be unexpected nor would it draw the eye. Along Ivydale Road, I saw that the ridge height between some attached houses varies partly to take into account the gently sloping ground. In that context, the raised ridgeline of No 77 and the relationship between the finished dwelling and the properties on each side would not be conspicuous. For the same reasons, there would be no disruption to the historical pattern in the same terrace wherein groups of dwellings within it share similar features including in some cases broadly level ridge heights.
8. Other properties close to No 77 have been extended and externally altered in ways that are far more prominent than the proposal before me without detriment to the historic streetscape or the quality of the local street scene. Thus, I am not persuaded that the proposal would materially detract from the character or qualities of the local area.
9. The Council appears to raise no objection to the new rear dormer and the front roof lights insofar as their effect on the character and appearance of the local area is concerned. I, too, find these elements of the proposal acceptable in their design, scale and general appearance. Both the proposed dormer and the new roof lights would be compatible in their local context. Taken as a whole, I consider that the intrinsic character of the appeal dwelling would be maintained with the new built form in place.
10. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not materially harm to the character and appearance of the local area. As such, there is no conflict with Policies 3.12 and 3.13 of the Southwark Plan or the Council's 2015 Technical Update to the Residential Design Standards (2011) (RDS). These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development achieves a high quality of design that is appropriate to its local context.
11. The plans show a maximum floor to internal ceiling height within the new dormer of about 2-metres. This arrangement would fall short of the minimum room height of 2.3-metres across at least 75% of the floor area within habitable rooms that is stated in the RDS. As the RDS provides a set of standards to guide the design of residential development that includes extensions to dwellings it is a relevant consideration.
12. The newly created living space would be compromised to some degree by the limited headroom. However, a good-sized room would be created and most of

the internal floor area within it would be useable. A head height of about 2-metres would still be sufficient for most people to stand up and move around within the room. Moreover, the accommodation within the new dormer would relate to a larger residential unit and space elsewhere in the existing dwelling could compensate, to some degree, for this particular deficiency. The proposal would also make more efficient use of the property, enabling two extra bedrooms and a bathroom to be provided that would improve the living conditions of the appellant and his family.

13. Taking all of these points into account, on balance, I find that the quality of accommodation within the new dormer extension would be adequate and that a conflict with a particular standard in the RDS is not, in this particular case, sufficient in itself to justify withholding planning permission.
14. Reference is made to roof level extensions at other properties in the local area notably at 291 Ivydale Road and 4 Sharsted Street, to which I have had regard. Planning permission was recently granted for each of these developments on appeal. In my experience, it is rare that the particular circumstances of developments and sites are so similar as to enable direct parallels to be drawn between them because local conditions often differ. In this instance, none of the approved schemes shares the same local street scene as the proposal. In any event, each case should be assessed on its own merits within the framework set by the development plan. Having done so, I find the appeal scheme acceptable for the reasons given.

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 imposed 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

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 2016/421/1, 2016/421/2, 2016/421/3, 2016/421/4, 2016/421/5, 2016/421/6, 2016/421/7, 2016/421/8, 2016/421/9, 2016/421/10 and the Site Location Plan that 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.