

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/16/3162414

21 Lanercost Road, London, SW2 3DP

- 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 Graeme Parkinson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/03721/FUL, dated 20 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing rear extension and the erection of double storey rear extension and loft conversion with roof lights, together with the installation of a side entrance door and alterations to the rear fenestration at ground and first floor level in association with the proposed extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing rear extension and the erection of double storey rear extension and loft conversion with roof lights, together with the installation of a side entrance door and alterations to the rear fenestration at ground and first floor level in association with the proposed extension at 21 Lanercost Road, London, SW2 3DP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/03721/FUL, dated 20 June 2016, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Procedural Matters

2. The site was the subject of previous applications for development in 2003¹ and in 2015². The most recent of these comprised an application for a two storey rear extension and was refused on the grounds that the proposed materials would be "discordant" with the host building; and the rear return would unbalance the pair of semi detached houses and detract from local character.
3. The applicant states that the application the subject of this appeal was prepared and submitted to address the Council's reasons for refusing the 2015 proposal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

¹ Ref: 03/02701/FUL.

² Ref: 15/05089/FUL.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two storey semi detached dwelling located on the northern side of Lanercost Road. The surrounding area is residential and is characterised by brick built two storey semi detached period dwellings.
6. Houses are set back from the road behind small gardens and/or parking areas and have longer gardens to the rear. Whilst I observed during my site visit that many houses have been altered and/or extended, such changes generally appear in keeping with local character. There is little evidence of significant change to the front of properties and consequently, the prospect from Lanercost Road is of a reasonably attractive street, where period features, rhythm of development and uniformity of style all contribute to local character.
7. Also during my site visit, I observed that, due to the depth and close spacing of pairs of semi detached dwellings, it was not possible to see through to the rear of properties. Consequently, the rear of dwellings along Lanercost Road are largely hidden from public view.
8. Further to the above, during my site visit, I observed there to be considerably more examples of extensions and larger-scale changes to the rear of buildings than to the front. Examples of extensions to the rear of Lanercost Road include flat-roof dormers, pitched-roof dormers, a glazed conservatory, a timber clad extension, pitched roof projections, flat roof projections, single storey extensions, two storey extensions. There is little doubt that variety in the way of rear extensions forms part of Lanercost Road's character.
9. Given the length of rear gardens along this side of Lanercost Road and the fact that they back on to the relatively long rear gardens of dwellings along South Circular Road, I found that these widely varying alterations have little, if any, harmful impact on either residential amenity or the green and spacious qualities of the area. I note that the Council has considered residential amenity and found that no harm would arise in this regard in respect of the proposal the subject of this appeal.
10. The proposed extension would be considerably narrower than the existing width of the host property and would extend to a height well below that of the host property's existing ridge height. Also, due to the proposed demolition of an existing projection, the proposal would only result in a very small cumulative increase in overall footprint.
11. Taking the above into account, there is little doubt in my mind that the proposal would comprise a carefully considered, sensitive extension and it would appear as a subordinate extension to the host property. The Council agrees that the choice of materials and windows would match the host property and states "...the proposed materials would be in accordance with Policy Q11."
12. The proposed extension would be wider than, and would differ from, the original rear projection appeal property. Indeed, it is designed to provide more useable space. The Council, in its decision notice, refers to the removal of the "gap" to the side of the existing rear return. However, this "gap" has already been removed on the property directly opposite the rear door of the appeal property. In this regard, I find that the proposal would assimilate well with its neighbour.

13. Whilst there are a number of similar original rear projections to that which currently exists at No 21 Lanercost Road, these are not seen from the public domain. Furthermore, the various changes to properties I refer to above mean that the rear projections all along this side of Lanercost Road have not been preserved as special features; nor do they, in any case, appear as readily observable uniform features that can be clearly viewed as a "set" of group characteristics that make a notable contribution to local character. I noted during my site visit that trees, planting, fences and alterations to properties means that the rear elevations of Lanercost Road are not observed as a group. Any gaps that do exist are largely obscured from view and there are few, if any, public locations from which they could possibly be contemplated as a "group" – albeit a group of widely different and altered rear elevations.
14. In the above regard, Local Plan³ Policy Q11 only requires features to be "authentically reproduced" where "necessary on heritage assets." The appeal property is not identified as a heritage asset. Notwithstanding this, I find that the subordinate development proposed, along with its choice of materials and fenestration, comprises a sustainable development that responds positively to the original architecture of the host property. Similarly, whilst there is guidance⁴ suggesting that alterations to rear returns are likely to be resisted in groups where there is uniformity, I find that the rear of the appeal property cannot be widely observed as part of a uniform "group" and there is no substantive evidence to the contrary.
15. The proposal does not disrupt the main roofline of the host property and consequently, there would be little, if any, impact from the proposal when observed from Lanercost Road. Whilst the rear of the property would, if the development went ahead, differ from that to the rear of its adjoining neighbour, this would only be apparent from the far end of either property's rear garden. There would be no harmful unbalancing effect and there would be no discernible impact on the wider area's local character. Indeed, from observation it can be deduced that many of the pairs of dwellings along Lanercost Road already appear different to one another when seen from the rear.
16. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed development comprises a subordinate addition that preserves local character. It is not contrary to the Framework, Local Plan policy Q11 or the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Conditions

17. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council against the six tests set out in paragraph 206 of the Framework. A condition relating to the relevant plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.
18. A condition controlling materials is necessary to protect local character.

³ Lambeth Local Plan (2015).

⁴ Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2015).

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, the appeal succeeds.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR

**Schedule of Conditions attached to
Appeal Decision APP/N5660/D/16/3162414
21 Lanercost Road, London, SW2 3DP**

- 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: 0303-200; 0303-201; 0303-202; 0303-203; 0303-205; 0303-206.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the building shall match those used in the existing building.
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