

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2017

by F Rafiq BSc (Hons), MCD, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/16/3164276

75 Cliffview Road, Ladywell, London, SE13 7DB

- 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 & Mrs Ashurst against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/16/097478 dated 13 July 2016 was refused by notice dated 7 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as a roof extension to a 1930s semi-detached property to create a hip-to-gable roof, incorporating a rear dormer to create a mezzanine bedroom space. The application also includes the replacement and upgrade of existing windows to the rear elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is an end terrace dwelling which is situated on the junction between Cliffview Road and Vicars Hill. There is a noticeable difference in levels in the area with Vicars Hill rising from the appeal property to the south and properties on the opposite side of Cliffview Road to the appeal site also siting at an elevated level from the road. The area is formed of terraces and closely spaced semi-detached houses, which are located on consistent build lines with front projecting bay windows and which generally have hipped roof forms. Although many of the properties have been subject to extensions and alterations, the aforementioned features provide a unifying element and contribute to the visually pleasant character of this residential area.
 4. The appeal proposal includes a gable roof extension that would replace the existing hipped and flat roof sections of the dwelling. I recognise the existing flat roof has a box like appearance does not sit sympathetically with the roof forms of the surrounding area. However, the proposal would represent a substantial change in the roof form of the appeal property. Although the overall height of the roof would not be altered, the gable-end design would give a
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disproportionate bulk to the upper part of the house. I was able to see at the time of my visit that there are other prominent properties in the area, however, the corner location of the appeal site and the changing topography around it would make this element of the proposed development prominent in the streetscene, where it would have the effect of appearing as an incongruous and over-sized addition to the host house. Although I have not been provided with front elevation plans, and the appellant states that the proposed development will retain its 1930's character, the alterations to the roof to form a gable will be clearly visible from Cliffview Road and would have an adverse impact on the streetscene despite the partial screening offered by vegetation from certain vantage points. Whilst I recognise that there are a variety of tall buildings visible in the wider landscape, the changing roof form would detract from the character of the local surrounding area, which, like the roof of the main part of the appeal dwelling which has not been extended, are formed predominantly of hipped roof forms.

5. A rear dormer is also proposed and reference is made to it being modest in comparison with others that exist in the area, it occupying less than 50% of the rear roof slope and aligning with the windows below. It would also utilise matching materials and adopt a contemporary design approach. Nevertheless, whilst it would be set down from the ridgeline and back from the eaves, the Council with reference to the Residential Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), state that it would not meet the recommended minimum distance from the proposed gable roof. Although the appellant states that Paragraph 6.7 of the SPD focuses on pre-1914 properties and those in Conservation Areas, most of the criteria in this paragraph are relevant to all roof extensions. As such, and given its positioning close to the gable end of the property, this element of the proposed development would further accentuate the bulk and mass of the gable end roof.
6. My attention has been drawn to a number of hip-to-gable developments and dormers nearby. I am not aware of the full circumstances of these cases, but in any event, these examples do not however provide support for the proposal and seek to demonstrate the visual harm that arises from substantial and inappropriate enlargements to properties.
7. In conclusion, the hip-to-gable roof and rear dormer would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host building and the area. It would conflict with Policy 15 of the Council's Core Strategy and DM Policy 30 and DM Policy 31 of the Council's Development Management Local Plan. It would also conflict with Paragraph 6.7 of the SPD. These require, amongst other matters, development proposals that attain a high standard of design and which create a positive relationship to the existing townscape. Reference has been made to the Lewisham Borough Wide Character Study but I have not been provided with details of this document.

Other Matters

8. I have taken note of the appellant looking to provide a more efficient layout for a family home and that the proposal seeks to respond to past mistakes and will replace the non-original pebble dash exterior with render. It would also incorporate environmental measures such as high thermal performance glass.

Whilst these matters weigh in favour of the development, they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified in respect of the main issue.

9. I note reference has been made to an alternative proposal which the appellant states is not acceptable for a number of reasons. I am however determining the appeal before me on its own merits.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised including the lack of objections from surrounding residents, that the proposal has been designed to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, reference to Permitted Development rights and the removal of the garage and dropped kerb, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

F Rafiq

INSPECTOR