
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 22 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/16/3163788

7 Littlecombe, Charlton SE7 7HS

- 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 Wang against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/2609/F, dated 26 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part single and part two storey side extension together with roof alterations.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The name of the appellant in the heading above is taken from the application form. This differs from that on the appeal form. However it has subsequently been confirmed that Mr Wang is the appellant and Ms Norma Jean Worden-Rogers, whose name appears on the appeal form, is acting on his behalf. I am content that the appeal can proceed on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the development would have on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

Reasons

4. Littlecombe is a modest cul-de-sac made up of three short terraces of houses. These have a consistent appearance and close relationship to one another which creates an intimate and harmonious character at the front which is sensitive to change. The appeal site is an end terrace house occupying a sizeable, roughly triangular corner plot. The building closely matches the appearance of the corresponding house at the other end of the terrace although the front elevations and rooflines step up slightly to that of No 7.
 5. The appeal proposal would extend the existing hipped roof to form a gable with a box dormer to the rear. A two storey hipped roof extension would project from the side above a larger single storey extension to the side and rear.
 6. Although the appellant's statement refers to gabled roofs being a feature of Littlecombe's streetscape this was not reflected by my observations when visiting the site and its surroundings. The 'hip to gable' roof alteration would
-

appear in contrast to the predominantly hipped roofs of other end terrace properties in Littlecombe and on similar properties in the vicinity. This would render the property more conspicuous and create an unbalanced appearance in relation to the short terrace. This roof configuration would be particularly noticeable, making the extended house stand out from Littlecombe and obvious when viewed from Highcombe, the street which adjoins it.

7. Such an arrangement would be materially different to that of a side dormer such as that, along with other extensions, benefitting from a lawful development certificate granted by the Council.
8. The two storey side extension would be set back from the front elevation with its ridge below that of the host building, giving it a subservient appearance. Whilst its hipped roof would reflect others in the area it would sit awkwardly abutting the gabled form of the roof extension, emphasising that element's dominant appearance. The resulting incongruous roof shape would harm the character and appearance of the host building, the terrace and, notwithstanding that it is not a designated heritage asset, the wider area.
9. As such the proposal would be contrary to the high quality design requirements of London Plan, 2015 Policy 7.4 and Core Strategy¹ Policies DH1 and DH(a). In particular criterion iii. of Policy DH(a) requires roof extensions to respect the scale and character of the host building, the street scene and surrounding area which is supported by Council guidance² that conversions from a hip end roof into a flat gable end roof should be avoided. These policies accord with national policy³ that permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character of an area.
10. The single storey side extension would be set back from the front elevation of the house which is in close proximity to 8 Littlecombe, an adjoining property set at right angles to the site. This would mean that it would not be a prominent feature in the streetscape and would appear subservient to the host building. Similarly, although it would project a considerable distance from the existing rear elevation, it would remain situated in a generous corner plot, largely obscured from public view.
11. The rear dormer, although large, would be set away from the ridge and eaves and would be largely hidden from views from surrounding streets as a result of intervening buildings, considerably limiting any adverse effects. Notwithstanding the effect of the change in roof shape, even considered together, these other alterations would not be harmful as a result of their cumulative effects. Each scheme must be determined on its own individual merits and the Council's generalised concern of a precedent being set would not make these elements otherwise unacceptable. However, the avoidance of harm in these respects would not alter the detrimental effects of the proposed roof alterations.

Other Matters

12. I can sympathise with the appellant's requirements to provide additional accommodation for his growing family in a currently modest house and which

¹ Royal Greenwich Local Plan – Core Strategy with Detailed Policies, 2014.

² Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance - Supplementary Planning Document, 2016, paragraph 5.45.

³ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 64.

may be difficult to afford elsewhere. However, I cannot give such personal considerations any weight. I have not been presented with any evidence to support the appellant's view that extensions to end terrace properties are well established in the locality to any degree that would make the proposal less harmful in such a context.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and the area contrary to development plan and national policy, as well as Council guidance. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR