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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2017

**by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/W/16/3161226**

**Nemus Apartments, 21-43 Bush Road, London SE8 5AP**

- 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 Property Liaison against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
  - The application Ref 16/AP/1187, dated 24 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 May 2016.
  - The development proposed is creation of a new roof storey to provide 2 new dwellings comprising 1 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed flats.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matter

2. Since the refusal of planning permission the London Plan has been updated and the 2016 version published. Although the substance of the policies referred to by the Council, policies 7.4 and 7.6, has not been amended I have referred to the 2016 version of the London Plan in my decision.

### Main Issue

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

### Reasons

4. 21-43 Bush Road is a brick built block of flats that has recently been refurbished and extended by way of an additional storey on the central section of the roof and a four-storey extension at the rear<sup>1</sup>. The building accommodates 21 flats. The proposal seeks the addition of another storey to provide two further residential units. The extension would be a timber framed structure, clad in timber boarding, which would be set in from the sides of the existing extension and would feature balconies enclosed by balustrades.
5. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of properties of different ages and styles. To the north of the building is a terrace of two-storey late Victorian houses. To the east, beyond a builder's yard which accommodates a collection of outbuildings, are two and three storey buildings fronting Lower

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<sup>1</sup> Planning application Ref: 10/AP/3661 granted 11 February 2011

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Road. Immediately south of the site is a modest, modern three-storey block of flats with a hipped roof and on the opposite side of Bush Road, a busy main road, is an estate of flats including some that are 5 and 7 storeys high.

6. My attention has been drawn to the Council's 2015 Technical Update to the Residential Design Standards Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD), which sets out the standard of design expected from new development in the Borough. The SPD requires all new extensions to, amongst other things, harmonise with the scale and style of the original building, successfully integrate with their surroundings and not visually dominate neighbouring properties. Roof extensions, it advises, will not be permitted in certain circumstances including on buildings which are the same height or significantly higher than their neighbours especially those which have been extended in the past or where it would unbalance the proportions of a building.
7. The existing roof extension sits comfortably on the building. Set back from the frontage of the main part of the structure, and comparable in terms of its height with the neighbouring flats, it is not unduly prominent in the street scene. The proposed extension, however, would increase the height of the building such that it would be a storey higher than the flats and considerably higher than the two storey terraced houses to the north. Consequently the proposal would be prominent in the street scene and dominate the domestic scale of the houses adjacent to it.
8. In addition, the cumulative impact of the existing and proposed extensions would dominate the original structure and significantly alter the proportions of the building, which originally had a horizontal emphasis. Whilst the existing extension is clearly subservient in terms of its scale and design, a two storey extension would visually compete with it. As such the proposal would appear as an incongruous feature in the street scene.
9. I recognise that taller blocks of flats are sited opposite the site. However, this appears to me to be a purpose built residential estate. Its context is not therefore comparable to the appeal site, which is that of a well-established, already extended building sited adjacent to buildings of a smaller scale. I accept that the development would not dominate these flats, but that has no bearing on the relationship between the site and the two-storey houses adjacent to it.
10. For the reasons set out, the proposal would be contrary to Policies 3.12 and 3.13 of the Southwark Plan 2007, Strategic Policy 12 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016 which in various ways seek to ensure that new development respects its context, and to the SPD as set out above.
11. The benefits of the proposal would be in the provision of an additional two units of accommodation in a sustainable location close to public transport routes and local services. There is no reason to suggest that the flats would not provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation. However, the benefits arising from the development are limited by its scale and would be insufficient to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

**Conclusion**

12. For these reasons and taking into account all other matters raised, including representations made by local residents, the appeal is dismissed.

*S Ashworth*

INSPECTOR