The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 March 2017

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/17/3168128
5 Beverley Court, Breakspears Road, London, SE4 1UN

- 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 Ms Faye Wynne against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
- The application Ref DC/16/096965, dated 2 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 November 2016.
- The development proposed is the construction of a dormer window to the rear roofslope, the insertion of a heritage type rooflight to the front roofslope, and the insertion of a boiler flue to the rear roofslope.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed rear dormer window would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Brockley Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Beverley Court lies within the Brockley Conservation Area, and is a short cul-de-sac with access from Breakspears Road. It comprises three terraces of houses with seven houses in each. No 5 is a mid-terraced, two-storey house on the western side of the road. The other two terraces are situated to the south, fronting onto a turning and parking area at the head of the road. There is a general uniformity of basic design principles within the three terraces of houses.

4. The proposed development would involve the construction of a dormer extension in the rear roofslope of the property. It would be some 3 metres wide, 2.5 metres high and around 2.8 metres deep. The rear-facing elevation would be largely glazed, while the rest of the dormer would be zinc-clad with a GRP roof. It would be set in from the boundaries with the adjoining houses by around 800mm, and would be some 500mm up from the eaves and 500mm down from the roof ridge. The proposal would also include the introduction of a heritage style rooflight to the front roofslope, and a zinc-clad boiler flue to the rear roofslope, but there are no significant issues raised by these minor elements of the proposal.

5. The Brockley Conservation Area (CA) as a whole comprises largely sizeable Victorian houses, although there are several examples of groups of smaller houses or other buildings in courts or mews developments within the area. Beverley Court is one such development, and the houses form a pleasant, somewhat secluded group between Breakspears Road and Wickham Road. They are two-storey with relatively low eaves. The terrace of which the appeal property forms a part has an unbroken roofscape both to the front and rear slopes, as does the nearby terrace containing Nos 8-14.

6. The CA Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) indicates that one or two small dormers may be acceptable on rear roofslopes, but that large bulky extensions using modern materials are not. I accept that the appeal property is not a sizeable Victorian dwelling, but in the context of the terraces of smaller houses along Beverley Court, I consider that the dormer as proposed would appear bulky and over-dominant in relationship to both the host property and the terrace as a whole. The Council itself notes that the scale and massing of the extension raises some concerns from a conservation perspective, in particular the width of the cheeks and its relationship with existing features of the property. I concur with that view and consider that the proposal would, on this basis, be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA.

7. In addition, the glazed window element does not relate well to the windows in the rest of the rear elevation, since it does not align vertically with those windows, and its design, including the larger window panes, does not respect the scale or appearance of the smaller windows below.

8. The appellant contends that the proposed dormer would not be viewable from any public road. This is the case, but regardless of visibility from outside of the cul-de-sac, the unsympathetic scale and appearance of the dormer would be detrimental to the character and appearance of Beverley Court, and of the appeal property itself. The appellant also notes that planning permission has recently been granted for other dormers in another part of the CA. However, I have little information as to the context of these examples and, in any case, I have dealt with this proposal on its own merits.

9. Finally, the appellant contends that the additional room in the roofspace created by this proposal is needed in the event that she starts a family and wishes to remain living in the area. I have sympathy with these points, but it would appear that other houses in the terrace may have rooms in the roofspace without use of a dormer, and I am not convinced that the proposal as submitted is the only way to create effective additional living space in the property.

10. In conclusion, I find that the proposal, by virtue of its unsympathetic scale and appearance in the context of the host property and the terrace as a whole, would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Brockley Conservation Area. Moreover, it would conflict with Policies 31 and 36 of the Council's Development Management Local Plan, which require development to respect and/or complement the form and detailing of original buildings, and extensions to be compatible with the characteristics of Conservation Areas.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR