

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 April 2017

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/17/3169401
53 Milton Road, London SE24 0NW

- 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 and Mrs Tim Frost and Sarah Bundy against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/06044/FUL, dated 19 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a ground floor side and rear extension and first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a ground floor side and rear extension and first floor rear extension at 53 Milton Road, London SE24 0NW in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/06044/FUL, dated 19 October 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 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: Refs SY/01 Rev A, SY/02 Rev A, SY/03 Rev A, WD/11 Rev A, WD/12 Rev A, WD/13 Rev A and the Location Plan, which shows the site edged red.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mainly 2-storey end terrace house in a street of similar properties within the Poets Corner Conservation Area (CA). The CA is predominantly residential in character. Within the CA, buildings are typically traditional style semi-detached or terraces that are arranged in a grid street layout, forming a generally well-mannered streetscape. It is the architectural quality and coherent street frontages of buildings that principally contribute to
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the CA as a designated heritage asset. From what I saw, there is much greater variation in the built form at the rear of buildings in the CA due partly to various external alterations and extensions that have been carried out.

4. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Policy Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan (LP) reflects this statutory duty. It applies whether or not the development sought is prominent or available to public view.
5. The proposal is to enlarge the appeal dwelling by introducing a first floor extension above the existing single storey rear projection and by infilling the rear recess with a ground floor extension. As the appeal scheme would be at the back of the host building, away from the road, it would have no effect on the character and qualities of the local street scene to which No 53 belongs.
6. At the rear, the proposal would significantly add to the scale and mass of the existing dwelling. The new first floor element would elongate the 2-storey rear projection to the extent that it would be noticeably longer than that of its attached counterpart, which is 55 Milton Road. With a stepped profile at first floor level, the general balance and broad symmetry of the rear projection that is paired between Nos 53 and 55 would be altered. Section 3.7 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, Building Alterations and extensions (SPD) notes that alterations to the basic form of the rear return are likely to be resisted in groups where there is uniformity. In this case, the group to which the finished building would belong, which includes the properties within the host and neighbouring terraces, include a plethora of rear additions and alterations such that any strong sense of uniformity and consistency in built form has been significantly diminished. In that varied context, the proposal would not appear obtrusive nor would it unduly disrupt or imbalance the appearance of the rears of Nos 53 and 55.
7. The single storey element of the proposal would also alter the basic form of the rear return by extending it sideways at ground floor level. However, planning permission has already been granted on appeal for a similar proposal that would do likewise. With a largely glazed mono-pitched roof and a line of full-length windows in the new rear elevation, this element of the proposal would have an overall lightweight appearance. This arrangement would visually accentuate the primacy of the rear return. While the single storey element would not be set back from the corner of the main return, no visual disharmony in the completed rear and side elevations would result.
8. Taken together with matching external materials and window openings that would be in keeping with the design of the host building, I consider that the house once enlarged would have an acceptable overall appearance. It would have been significantly changed at the rear, but taken as a whole the completed building would be of a high standard of design. Although the new first floor and ground floor elements would appear as a single entity, the linear form of the larger and taller 2-storey rear projection would remain clearly legible. This would positively respond to the architectural style and intrinsic character of the host building. From the rear of the site and nearby properties the proposal would be seen with the far more substantial dwelling beyond. In those views, the proposal would appear as a subordinate addition.

9. The Council states that No 53 is, in itself, a heritage asset because it is a 19th Century property and exhibits all the positive aspects of the CA. Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that heritage assets include designated assets, such as a conservation area, and non-designated assets, as identified by a local planning authority, including locally listed buildings. In this case, it is the CA that is the heritage asset, not individual buildings within it unless they have been specifically designated or identified. The Council has not provided detailed evidence to show that No 53 has been individually assessed and identified as a heritage asset.
10. Insofar as the CA, as a whole, is concerned, rear returns are a characteristic feature of many properties and rear elevations contribute to the character and appearance of the designated area. However, the principal value of the CA is derived from its cohesive street frontages, which would be unaffected by the proposal. For the reasons given, there would be no significant harm to the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling or the terrace to which it belongs.
11. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area. The character and appearance of the CA would be preserved. Accordingly, there is no material conflict with LP Policies Q11 and Q22 and the Council's SPD. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development achieves good design, safeguards heritage assets and positively responds to the local context and historical character. It would also comply with the Framework, which emphasises the importance of securing high quality design and states that heritage assets should be protected or enhanced.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings and to require that the development be carried out in accordance with them as this provides certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, a condition is imposed to require that the external materials match those of the existing building.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR