

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/17/3169434

183 Fentiman Road, London SW8 1JY

- 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 Jonathan Hall against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/05675/FUL, dated 30 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the insertion of a new dormer window located on the rear roof slope of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the insertion of a new dormer window located on the rear roof slope of the property at 183 Fentiman Road, London SW8 1JY in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/05675/FUL, dated 30 September 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 P_003 Revision P02, P_004 Revision P02, P_005 Revision P02, P_006 Revision P02, P_007 Revision P07, P_008 Revision P06, P_009 Revision P05, P_010 Revision P02, P_011 Revision P02, and P_012 Revision P02.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension 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 mid-terrace 3-storey dwelling of traditional style that falls within the Vauxhall Conservation Area (CA). The CA covers a wide area and is mixed in character. To my mind, the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset is mainly derived from its leafy residential streets,
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the architectural quality of its Victorian terraces and its public open space. With rows of late 19th Century residential terraces along Fentiman Road, kerbside trees and Vauxhall Park nearby, the immediate area to which the site belongs exhibits several of these key characteristics.

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) echoes this statutory duty.
5. The Council has recently granted planning permission for two flat roof dormers on the rear roof slope of No 183. As this permission remains extant and there is nothing before me to indicate that it could not be fully implemented, it is a realistic fall back position against which the proposal should be evaluated.
6. Unlike the approved scheme, a single flat roof dormer is proposed that would be centrally placed onto the rear roof slope just above the eaves. It would result in a significant change to the appearance of the existing dwelling at the rear. Nevertheless, the proposal would be modest in size and set in from the edge of the roof on all four sides. Consequently, the new dormer would be appropriately sited. With a good expanse of rear roof slope evident around the new dormer, the proposal would clearly be a subordinate addition, with the main roof remaining dominant in the composition. Furthermore, the new dormer would be detailed in a traditional manner with lead clad sides and a timber-framed window that would blend in with the appearance of the wider roofscape. Taken together, the design, scale and general appearance of the new dormer would be acceptable. The traditional style and intrinsic character of the host dwelling would be maintained with the new built form in place.
7. The rear gardens of the properties on either side of No 183 are modest in depth and this, combined with the screening provided by boundary features, would mean that upward views from any one garden towards the rear roof of No 183 would be very limited. None of the proposal would be evident from the road given its position at the back of the property and the screening provided by existing buildings. Consequently, there would be no discernable effect on the architectural quality of the street frontages or to the spacious feel and verdant qualities of the local street scene to which No 183 belongs.
8. From the area that surrounds the site, the proposal would mainly be evident from a builder's storage yard beyond the rear of No 183. From this location, the new addition would be seen at an upward angle from some distance. It would be seen beyond the substantial rear projection of No 183 and would be partly obscured by the chimneystack in the foreground. It would be visually 'read' in the context of the more substantial and varied built form of the host building and wider terrace of which No 183 forms part. In those views, the proposal would be seen along with the single dormers and roof lights on the rear roofs of other properties in the same terrace. In that context, the proposal would not draw the eye because it would appear compatible with its surroundings.
9. The new dormer window would not line up with the existing openings in the rear façade and so the proposal would conflict with part of LP Policy Q11 (k), which states that dormers on sensitive buildings should be aligned with the openings below. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Building*

Alterations and Extensions (SPD) contains a similar requirement. As No 183 falls within the CA and its front and rear elevations are evident from public and private vantage points, it is capable of being considered as a sensitive building.

10. On the ground, it is difficult to see the dormer window and the openings below 'face on' from any single location. From the builders yard beyond the rear of the site, views of the new dormer window would be at an oblique angle. It would appear appropriate in size and the central position of the proposed window would satisfactorily relate to the openings below. There would be no disruption to the resultant pattern and hierarchy of fenestration in the rear elevation of No 183. Given these findings, I am not convinced that a conflict with a part of LP Policy Q11 and the SPD is sufficient, in itself, to warrant withholding planning permission.
11. The Council has already approved rear dormers at the appeal property, which could be implemented, and this type of roof extension is evident in one half of the six properties that make up the terrace of which No 183 forms part. Whether or not these existing dormers have planning permission, they form part of the established character of the local area. Other buildings in the CA include more prominent dormers in the public realm compared to the proposal, including later 19th Century residential terraces. Thus, I am not persuaded that the proposal would be obtrusive or an uncharacteristic extension.
12. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposal would not cause significant harm to 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 Q5, Q11 and Q22, or with the Council's SPD. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that development achieves good design, safeguards heritage assets such as conservation areas and positively responds to the local context and historical character. It would also comply with the National Planning Policy Framework, which emphasises the importance of securing high quality design and states that heritage assets should be protected or enhanced.

Conditions

13. 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

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

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR