
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 April 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: 8 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/17/3171239

94 Broomwood Road, London SW11 6LA

- 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 Mrs Susie Johnson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/7301, dated 14 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is a basement extension and new lightwells to the front and rear of the property.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the proposed front lightwell would have on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a terraced house with a modest front garden area, an arrangement it shares with other properties in the terrace. The proposed basement extension would include the creation of a front lightwell which would occupy much of the existing garden space between the bay window and the street.
 4. The building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area through its attractive appearance both in itself and as part of the terrace in which it is situated which has a high degree of uniformity. This character extends to the space created by the front gardens, many of which have hedges or shrubs in them which soften the frontages of properties.
 5. By occupying much of the space between the bay window and the front boundary, the proposed lightwell would create a conspicuous void to the front of the property and would not appear as a subservient feature within the frontage. The drawings show that the thickness of the retaining wall would extend to the side, and almost to the front, boundaries of the property. This would effectively leave very little room for any substantial or enduring soft landscaping to be planted in the ground or even that in containers which the appellant proposes.
-

6. This arrangement would be in contrast to the current garden which, although not presently landscaped, in its current configuration has a considerable area available for planting as well as providing a space between the house and the street. Whilst more space would be retained to the side adjacent to the front door this would be limited in its extent with much of the space required to provide access to the property. Existing or proposed enclosures of a similar height to others in the street along the front boundary would limit the proposal's prominence from views from farther afield, however the extent of the lightwell would remain apparent at close quarters.
7. Whilst most properties in the terrace do not have lightwells to the front, I note that there is a more modest lightwell at 98 Broomfield Road, next door but one to the appeal site, which the Council advise accorded with development plan policies. When I visited the site I noted that this was set away from front and side boundaries and that boundary planting had been carried out to the front, circumstances which are different to those of the appeal proposal.
8. The combination of the size of the lightwell and the extent of the loss of front garden area would materially harm the character and appearance of the building, the terrace and the area. This would be contrary to Local Plan¹ Policies DMH 5 and DMS 1 which seek good design that responds positively to local spatial character. In particular, criterion viii. of Policy DMH 5 seeks to retain at least 50% of the original front garden depth where lightwells are proposed. It would also be contrary to national policy² which seeks good design which takes the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.
9. The appellant points out that the resulting enlarged dwelling would help to maintain a range of house types, an aim supported by development plan policies. However any benefits in this respect would be limited and would be outweighed by the above harm. Furthermore, there is no evidence that such accommodation could only be achieved by way of the proposed configuration.

Other Matters

10. In support of her appeal the appellant has directed me to a number of other proposals which include lightwells which have the benefit of planning permission, both in the vicinity of the site and elsewhere in the Borough. However, the drawings she has provided for the scheme, allowed on appeal, at 45 Lavender Gardens show two lightwells which would be set back from the front boundary. Similarly the drawings provided for 99 Broomwood Road show a lightwell which would be well set back from the front boundary and which the Council advise accords with policy.
11. Although that at 113 Salcott Road appears closer, this too would have a considerably more generous space between it and the front boundary than the appeal proposal would have. The limited drawings provided for that at 20 Patten Road are annotated to the effect that the lightwell would be less than half the depth of the frontage. On the basis of the information provided, all these other examples are materially different to the appeal proposal.
12. The information provided for 50 Hillier Road and 100 Branfield Road is too limited to establish the relationship between the proposed lightwells and front

¹ Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document, 2016.

² National Planning Policy Framework, paragraphs 17, 58 and 64.

garden areas. However in all the cases raised, I have not been provided with full details of the schemes nor the considerations, including that of the development plan, which led to their being considered acceptable. These other examples do not, therefore, lead me to consider that the appeal proposal would be acceptable, which in any event I have considered on its own merits.

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 area and would be contrary to development plan and national policies. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR