
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 May 2017

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP Dist. MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 12 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/17/3171228

249 Wricklemarsh Road, Kidbrooke, London SE3 8DL

- 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 Thanh Huyen Nguyen against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 16/2393/F, dated 1 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of a two storey side extension containing a 'Granny Annexe'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The appellant's name in the header above is taken from the original application form. It is noted that in the appeal form and the appeal statement the appellant's name is given as 'Thanh' rather than 'Thank'.
3. Notwithstanding the description of the proposal as a 'Granny Annexe', in dealing with the application the Council considered it as a new dwelling. However, Plan Ref: 1106-PL-112 Rev. A shows that the proposed development would utilise the same internal staircase as the existing house. Furthermore, none of the plans or information provided indicates an intention to use the extension as a separate dwelling, or to subdivide the plot.
4. It is therefore appropriate to deal with the appeal on the basis of the development as applied for, namely an annexe. As noted by the appellant, any concerns that the extension could be used as a separate dwelling may be addressed by way of a condition that would restrict its occupation to purposes ancillary to the residential use of the host property.

Main issues

5. The main issues in this case are:
 - i) The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.
 - ii) Whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants with particular regard to the level of internal space.

Reasons

i) Character and appearance

6. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached house. The character of this part of Wricklemarsh Road is strongly defined by pairs of semi-detached houses of a similar form and appearance. Each neighbouring pair is separated by a single vehicle width shared driveway. A consequence of this layout is that it prevents the addition of bulky two storey side extensions and so they are not a typical feature of the houses.
7. The ridge and eaves of the proposed two storey extension would be set down from the existing house. The front wall would also be set back. However, the front elevation would nearly be as wide as the existing house. As highlighted by the Council, side extensions should generally not exceed half the width of the host property in order to appear subservient.
8. Owing to its width, the extension would be disproportionate and result in the host property having an over-extended appearance. This would be particularly incongruous when, as described above, bulky two storey side additions are not a typical feature within the street scene.
9. It is not intended for the proposed development to be used as a separate dwelling. Nevertheless, owing to a combination of its width, the full replication of the bay window features of the host and the provision of a separate front door, the extension would have the appearance of a dwelling. It would visually change the existing pair of semi-detached houses into a short terrace. This would be an alien form of development in the street scene and it would be at odds with the rhythmic pattern of semi-detached pairs which is an important part of the character of the area.
10. The harm identified above is not lessened to any tangible degree by the fact the appeal property occupies an unusually wide plot and it is positioned at the end of a row, adjoining a large recreation ground. Similarly, the benefit of providing a Granny Annexe does not outweigh the harm.
11. It is understood that planning permission was previously granted at the site for the demolition of the garage and the erection of a two storey side extension (Council Ref: 08/0679/F). However, the full details of that scheme have not been provided and the officer report for the appeal development states it was significantly smaller than the current proposal. Consequently, there is no submitted evidence of a precedent being set for the development of an extension of the proportions proposed.
12. In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would thereby conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) and Policy DH1 of the Council's Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014). Amongst other things, the policies expect developments to be of a high quality of design and provide a positive relationship between the proposed and existing urban context by taking account of the established layout and spatial character, as well as the bulk and massing of the adjacent townscape.
13. Whilst the Council also refers to Policies H5 and H(c) of the Core Strategy in its reasons for refusal, these are seemingly related to its consideration of the proposed development as a new dwelling.

ii) Living conditions

14. This issue derives from the Council's consideration of the proposed development as a new two bedroom dwelling. It would fail to meet the minimum overall floor space standards specified by the 'Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard' and the London Plan.
15. To address this issue the appellant has put forward an amendment to the first floor layout so there would only be one bedroom, (Plan Ref: 1106-PL-112 Rev C, attached to the appeal statement). The adoption of this amendment would result in the space standards being exceeded.
16. However, on the basis that the proposed development is a 'Granny Annexe' rather than a new dwelling, (which as noted in paragraph 4 could be addressed by way of a condition that would restrict its occupation to purposes ancillary to the residential use of the host property) then an assessment against the standards is not warranted.
17. As an annexe, the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants with particular regard to the level of internal space. It would thereby not conflict with Policy 3.5 of the London Plan or Policy H5 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion

18. Notwithstanding the conclusion on living conditions, the harm in respect of the character and appearance of the area is an overriding consideration. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C J Ford

APPOINTED PERSON