
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 May 2017

by Zoe Raygen Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/17/3167156
20A Fairthorn Road, Charlton SE7 7RL

- 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 Bevilacqua against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/2726/F, dated 18 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the formation of a loft conversion comprising L shaped rear dormer window with Juliet balcony.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 20A Fairthorn Road forms a first floor flat within a building sited in the middle of a uniform terrace of houses. The property has a rear outrigger in common with others in the terrace.
 4. The materials used in the development would match the host dwelling. However, the proposed L- shaped dormer would be a large addition taking up most of the rear roof slope and extend some distance along the rear outrigger with only a minimal set back from the eaves and party wall. As a result it would not be subordinate to the roof but instead present a bulky, top heavy appearance to the rear elevation and significantly alter the traditional rear roof slope of the house. This would be contrary to advice in the Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2016 (SPD).
 5. I accept that the dormer would be sited below the ridge line and have very limited visibility from the road and the trees to the rear would provide a small degree of screening to the outlook from other residential properties. However, the roof would still be visible from neighbouring properties and would be more so in the winter when the mainly deciduous trees lose their leaves. The undue prominence of the dormer would therefore be apparent within the wider
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residential area where I saw no evidence of other such extensions within the locality.

6. The appellant points out that the extension would be permitted development if the property had not been in use as flats. However this dormer does require planning permission and I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
7. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy 7.4 of the London Plan The Spatial Development Strategy for Land Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (2016) (LP), Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 (CS) and the SPD. These require, amongst other things that development is of a high quality design that creates a positive relationship between the proposed and existing urban context and the scale and design is appropriate to the building and the locality.
8. The appellant states that Policy 7.4 of the LP refers to larger schemes and is therefore not applicable to a single dwelling. However I have seen nothing within the Policy to suggest that it refers to a certain size of development only.
9. The Framework is clear that innovation in design should not be stifled (paragraph 60). However, it also states that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. It seeks to ensure that new development relates well to neighbouring buildings (paragraph 59) and that development is integrated into the built and historic environment (paragraph 61). One of its key principles is that planning should always seek to secure high quality design (paragraph 17). The appeal scheme would fail to accord with these aims.

Other matters

10. The appellant refers to the need for the extra accommodation achieved by the appeal proposal for a growing family and the general under supply of housing in the area.
11. I fully understand the type of difficulties that may be experienced with a growing family and the consequent need for larger accommodation. However, these personal circumstances are likely to be short term when compared with more permanent changes to the size and character of the dwelling. They are not a justification for setting aside national and local policies to protect the character and appearance of the area and therefore carry little weight in my overall consideration of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR