
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA

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

Decision date: 13th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/17/3172184

83 St Josephs Vale, London, SE3 0XG

- 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 Andrew Cullen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/16/099624, dated 23 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as "the construction of a roof extension to the rear roof of 83 St Joseph's Vale, SE3, together with the insertion of roof lights to the front roof".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have determined this appeal on the basis of the plans listed by the Council as having been formally considered as part of the application. However, I have also received copies of revised plans submitted by the appellant. The evidence on file suggests that, whilst they were not cited on the Decision Notice, these were before the Council at the time the decision was made. The revised plans show an increased set back from the eaves of the host dwelling along with an increase in the set back of the "mansard infill". However, as per the original plans, there would be a very minimal step down in respect of the roof ridge height. The amended plans would, therefore, not be sufficient to overcome the harm I have identified below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area; including whether or not the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blackheath Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. 83 St Josephs Vale, the appeal property, is a fairly modern two-storey mid-terraced dwelling situated within the Blackheath Conservation Area (CA). The surrounding area is typified by residential properties of a similar age and style and, whilst there is some architectural variety there is a consistency in
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- character and appearance. The rear of the property, which has a single storey extension, is readily visible from the street.
5. The CA is a "heritage asset" as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seeks to ensure that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of an asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits.
 6. The proposal is to introduce additional accommodation in the roof space which would be facilitated through the construction of two rear dormer windows with a recessed "mansard infill". The proposed materials have been chosen to complement the existing dwelling.
 7. The roof slope of the host dwelling has a shallow pitch and, in order to allow a satisfactory internal ceiling height, the proposed extension would sit only fractionally below the existing ridge tile. The lack of a perceptible set-down from the ridge of No. 83, combined with the size of the proposed dormers would lead to an unsympathetic addition which would not appear subservient to, or sit comfortably with, the host dwelling.
 8. Furthermore, the visual interruption to the rear roof slope would harm the uniformity of the, currently unaltered, roof of the terrace within which No. 83 sits. I note the appellant's contention that there are a number of other examples of dormer constructions in the area. However, I was not provided with specific details in this regard and in my view, the proposed extension would also be out of keeping with other visible rear roof slopes in the immediate area which also appear to be largely unaltered.
 9. For the reasons outlined above, I consider that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. I note that the appeal property does not necessarily typify the key characteristics of the CA. Due to this, and the small scale of the development it would cause "less than substantial harm" to the significance of the heritage asset, but that harm is still sufficient to carry considerable weight against the appeal. There are no identified public benefits which would outweigh the harm I have identified.
 10. The proposal would consequently fail to accord with the aims of policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham local development framework Core Strategy, adopted June 2011 and policies DM30, DM31, DM36 of the Lewisham local development framework Development Management Local Plan, adopted November 2014. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that development provides a high quality of design which is compatible with and respects its local context. The policies also expect development to conserve and enhance the borough's heritage assets.
 11. The proposal would also be at odds with the aims of policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (LP), March 2016 which require development to provide a high quality design response which complements the local architectural character. There would also be conflict with policy 7.8 of the LP which states that development should conserve the significance of heritage assets. The proposal would also fail to meet the aims of guidance contained within the Lewisham Residential standards Supplementary Planning Document which aims for all

roof extensions to be sensitively designed, to retain the architectural integrity of the building and be subordinate to the principal elevations.

12. I note the concerns expressed regarding the impact of the proposal on living conditions at No. 81 with particular regard to privacy. Whilst I acknowledge that the additional windows would facilitate limited new opportunities for overlooking I consider that this is not uncommon in residential areas such as this. Moreover, the proposed windows would be sufficiently distant from No. 81 so as not to cause an unacceptable degree of harm.
13. Having regard to my conclusions on the main issue and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J O'Brien

APPOINTED PERSON