
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by Oliver Blower MA (T&CP)

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

Decision date: 13 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/17/3171133
163 Seely Road, Tooting, London SW17 9QX

- 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 Laurent Derruau against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 16/P3376, dated 29 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as "*Raise the ridge of the [sic] by 30 cm to do a loft extension with full width dormer*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two-storey mid-terrace house with a tiled pitched roof. The immediate area is characterised by traditional rows of terrace houses with broadly uniform ridge heights.
4. Although the wording of the development description on the application form is somewhat unclear, the proposal seeks to raise the ridge height of the pitched roof by approximately 30 cm and to construct a rear dormer, the top of which would intersect the new raised ridge. It would also include two rooflights to the front roof slope.
5. The ridge height would be higher than that of neighbouring roofs, and this in turn would necessarily change its pitch so that the roof would appear steeper than its neighbours. Consequently the effect of an increase in the ridge height would be to significantly change the roof form so that it would no longer match the broadly uniform height and slope of roofs on the terrace row, unacceptably harming this characteristic feature of the immediate area.
6. It is argued that the increase in height is small. However, the resultant change in pitch would draw attention to the increased height, so that cumulatively the roof would differ significantly in design and appear substantially larger, leading

to it appearing out of keeping with the characteristic uniformity of its neighbours.

7. The rear dormer, although set back from the eaves and set in from the sides of the roof, would be built to the same height as the raised ridge. The lack of a drop in height from the ridge would lead to an overly high and bulky structure that, rather than appearing subservient to the roof, would dominate the roof plane of the host building. This excessive bulk would be further amplified by the general increase in the height of the ridge, and would be particularly prominent when viewed from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties.
8. Consequently I conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building, terrace row and immediate area due to its excessive size, bulk, and design.
9. The proposed development, therefore, is contrary to policy CS14 of the London Borough of Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure development is designed in order to respect, reinforce and enhance the local character of the area in which it is located.
10. It is also contrary to policies DM D2 and DM D3 of the Merton Local Plan Sites and Policies Plan which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development relates positively and appropriately to the siting, rhythm, scale, proportions, height and massing of surrounding buildings and existing street patterns; and ensure proposals for dormer windows are of a size and design that respect the character and proportions of the original building and surrounding context and do not dominate the existing roof profile.
11. At the site visit my attention was drawn to two similar dormers at Nos 155 and 167 Seely Road. I am not aware of their planning background, but in any event I observed that the angle of their roofs and the height of their ridge broadly match that of neighbouring houses, so that the very moderate increase in height – if any – appears to be caused by the size of the ridge tiles only. Thus these examples are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
12. I note that the appellant seeks additional space for his family home. Although I am sympathetic to the appellant's aim, the benefit of additional space cannot outweigh the permanent harm to the immediate area identified above.
13. Finally, although the appellant has argued that the proposed development would not be at odds with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, the fact that I have identified conflict with the development plan policies detailed above means that this proposal is not acceptable.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and area. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

Oliver Blower

Appointed Person