
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: 14 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/17/3171680

123 Charlton Church Lane, London, SE7 7AA

- 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 Ms Swaraj Mann against the decision of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/4229/F, dated 21 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as "proposed first floor extension".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; including whether or not the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Charlton Village Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. 123 Charlton Church Lane, the appeal property, is a semi-detached residential dwelling situated within the Charlton Village Conservation Area (CA). The surrounding area is characterised by residential properties of a similar age and style which descend down the sloping road to the north. The rear of the property, which has a single storey extension and a large dormer window, is readily visible from The Heights, the road which runs along the side of the property.
4. 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.
5. The proposal would introduce a first floor rear extension above an existing ground floor extension and is an amendment to a very similar, but larger, proposal which was previously refused by the Council. The proposed flat-roofed extension would cover approximately just over half of the width of the property at first floor level and would be constructed with materials which would complement the existing dwelling.

6. The sloping nature of the streets in the area means that No. 123 is set slightly higher than its neighbour and is raised above ground level when viewed from the Heights. The appeal property is, consequently, a prominent feature in the street scene. The scale and appearance of the proposed extension, in combination with the flat roof, would give the appearance of an unsympathetic "boxy" addition which would not sit comfortably with the host dwelling. Furthermore, the roof form would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the roofs of the dwellings along Charlton Church Lane and the host dwelling. The proposal would also combine with the existing extension and dormer to further unbalance the appearance of the semi-detached pair of which No. 123 is part.
7. 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. Due to 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.
8. The proposal would, therefore, fail to accord with the aims of policies DH1 and DH(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy (CS), adopted July 2014. Amongst other things these policies require all developments to be of a high design quality and to provide a positive relationship between the proposed and existing urban context. Policy DH(a) also specifically states that flat roofs will not be acceptable on extensions when they are visible from the public highway. I have also found conflict with policies DH3 and DH(h) of the CS. These policies are concerned with protecting and enhancing the borough's heritage assets, including conservation areas.
9. 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 requires 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 Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document which requires extensions to be in keeping with the size of the original house and reiterates that flat roofs are unacceptable where an extension is visible from the public highway unless this is the roof style on the original house.
10. 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