
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2017

by Helen Hockenhull BA(Hons) B.PI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/D/17/3173878
7 and 9 Camberwell Grove, London SE5 8JA

- 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 Robert Peel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref 16/AP/3836, dated 5 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as the 'construction of x 2 side-by-side mansard roof extensions to the roofs of the properties, involving alterations to the rear elevations.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I note that the description of development as stated on the original planning application form has been altered by agreement between the parties. The description I have used in the banner heading reflects the agreed wording.

Main Issues

3. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host dwelling and the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Nos 7 and 9 Camberwell Grove form a pair of four storey early Victorian Italianate dwellings. The properties are a matching pair, though are part of a terrace of properties of different architectural styles. No. 9 Camberwell Grove has two existing rear dormers and two roof lights to the front roof slope. No7. has 2 roof lights installed to the rear and one to the front roof slope. The properties are located in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. Whilst the properties are not listed they are described as 'key unlisted buildings' in the Conservation Area Audit.
5. The Conservation Area is situated in the area of the original Camberwell village with properties constructed between the late 18th Century and early 20th Century. The area in which the appeal buildings are located has a mixed use with both residential buildings, shops, restaurants and the Mary Datchelor

School. The area is characterised by high density development of three and four storey height. The area has a strong building line and street trees add to the verdant character of the area. Architectural styles follow a classical theme creating strongly ordered form with rhythms of window and door openings.

6. The appeal proposes mansard roof extensions to both properties incorporating two dormers to both the front and rear constructed in lead. A roof light would be installed to the rear roof slope of No. 9 Camberwell Grove and one to the front roof slope of No. 7.
7. Whilst there are discrepancies in the submitted plans, it has been confirmed by the appellant that the existing cornice and parapet wall to the front elevation would be retained. The Council's Residential Design Standards Supplementary Planning Document (updated 2015) states that roof extensions will not be permitted where the building has roofline features designed to be seen against the sky. The Council in their reason for refusal has expressed concern that this feature would be undermined. However when viewed from street level the cornice, whilst very prominent on the front elevation, is not seen against the sky because of the presence of the parapet wall behind it. I therefore do not consider that the proposal would cause harm in this regard.
8. The party walls and ridge height would need to be raised by around a metre to facilitate the development. I consider that this would result in an overly tall and bulky roof extension which would undermine the original proportions of the building and its architectural style. The reduction in the height of the chimney stack would accentuate this adverse effect.
9. The adjoining buildings, Nos. 11-13 Camberwell Grove are higher than the appeal buildings. The proposed increase in height of around a metre would bring the height of the appeal building approximately in line with these neighbouring properties. I accept that there is some variation in building heights in the terraced row; this is part of its character. However I consider that the proposed increase in height would reduce the prominence and presence of the neighbouring building in the street scene and cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
10. The Council have also raised concern with regard to the hierarchy of window openings. These would be expected to diminish on the upper floors. The dormer windows proposed in the front elevation would reflect the alignment of the existing windows in the properties but they would only be marginally reduced in size. The appellant advises that these windows would be 1.1 metres high compared to the 1.3 metres height of the second floor windows. At the rear of the building the dormer windows would be around the same width as the windows immediately below, though they appear to be slightly reduced in depth. As a result the proposed dormer windows would not be sufficiently reduced in size to give the appearance of smaller attic windows maintaining the window hierarchy. Furthermore the lead surround to the dormers would accentuate their boxy appearance and increase their prominence in the roof slope.
11. Additionally, the proposed dormers appear to be positioned either in line with or above the parapet wall. The Council has commented that these windows would usually be expected to be below the parapet wall to ensure their subservience. The Appellant has brought my attention to other mansard extensions in the area where the windows are above the parapet walls. The

Council has commented that many of the mansards referred to are constructed in modern mock Georgian buildings which are not comparable to the appeal properties. However it appears to me from the appellant's evidence that a number of the buildings referred to are listed and the mansards are either original or later additions. Whilst I agree that it would be good design practice for the windows to be lower, having regard to the other examples in the locality, I do not consider that in this regard alone; the dormers would cause material harm.

12. In terms of the materials to be used in the construction of the dormers, slate tiles and lead cladding are commonly used in the area. However in relation to the appeal building, the lead cladding at the width proposed appears discordant with the stone heads and sills of the existing windows below, particularly on the front elevation.
13. I accept that the appeal proposal would provide matching mansard extensions to both 7 and 9 Camberwell Grove, so that the pair of dwellings would have a balanced appearance, particularly to the rear where currently one property, No. 9, has a roof addition. However as a result of the scale, design, height and bulk of the proposed roof extensions, I consider that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host building or the conservation area.
14. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, great weight should be given to the assets conservation. Having regard to paragraph 134 of the Framework, I consider that given the scale of the appeal proposal and its effect on the conservation area as a whole, the harm to the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area would be less than substantial in this case.
15. In line with guidance, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The development would provide additional living space for the residents of the two dwellings. Whilst this would clearly benefit the occupiers it would have little benefit to the wider public and would not outweigh the harm of the proposal to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
16. Accordingly the appeal proposal would fail to comply with Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, Strategic Policies 12 and 13 of the Southwark Core Strategy 2011, Saved Policies 3.2, 3.12, 3.13, 3.15, 3.16 and 3.18 of the Southwark Plan 2007 and the Council's Residential Design Standards (Updated 2015). These policies aim to ensure a high quality design and the conservation and protection of the historic environment. I consider these policies to be generally consistent with the Framework in particular Section 12 and paragraphs 17 and 56 which have similar aims.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I dismiss this appeal.

Helen Hockenhufl

INSPECTOR