
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2017

by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/17/3168886
242 Burrage Road, Plumstead SE18 7JP

- 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 Aspire Assets Ltd against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 16/2502/F, dated 1 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion and addition of two dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. It was evident from my site visit and from the evidence before me¹ that the development applied for has been constructed although I was unable to establish whether it was finished internally or being occupied. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Plumstead Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is formed by a 2 storey residential property sited in a row of similar dwellings, close to the junction with Cambridge Row and within the Plumstead Conservation Area ('PCA'). Consequently, the rear roof slopes are visible from neighbouring gardens and Cambridge Row to the rear. The immediate locality is predominately residential in character with some modern 3 and 4 storey residential developments to the rear although these are located outside the PCA.
5. I consider that the significance of the PCA mainly derives from its large open spaces, including the Common itself and Woolwich Cemetery, and the fringe of buildings around them. Many of the latter are Victorian terraced houses, of which the appeal dwelling is one, have pitched roofs which are visible in the surrounding area and positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'), makes it clear that when considering the impact of a proposed

¹ Application form states work commenced 4 July 2016.

- development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
6. It was evident from my visit that whilst neighbouring properties contained a variety of sloping and stepped roof planes and flat roofs at ground floor level, there were no similar or other dormers breaking the rear roof planes of properties within this row. There were examples of dormer windows further along Burrage Road to the rear although these were a pair of much smaller pitched roof additions that provided no significant increase in floorspace and did not disrupt the overall form of the roof.
 7. The proposal results in the conversion and extension of the roof space by 2 rooms and a shared WC, accommodated by a flat roof dormer window on the rear extending across much of its width, almost three-quarters of its depth and projecting for a significant depth over an existing 2 storey mono pitched roof element.
 8. The Plumstead Common Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2010² identifies poorly designed dormers as a detrimental change to the PCA. It advises that dormers, whilst not a characteristic feature, might be less damaging on rear elevations as they are usually less visible from the street. To fit in appropriately, however, it recommends that such dormers should be small, that is with a face no more than 1m square; well set in from the ridge and eaves; where appropriate have a pitched or hipped roof; and be in keeping with the style of house. The proposal before me would not meet these specifications.
 9. Moreover, the flat roof is approximately level with the ridge of the main room and in combination with the siting of the property and the overall bulk and mass so close to the junction with Cambridge Road, it is conspicuous from neighbouring gardens and when approaching the PCA from Cambridge Row.
 10. Despite the use of darker materials on the external elevations, with its white upvc windows, angular box projections and juxtaposition to the white rear wall of the host property sits in stark contrast to the traditional character and appearance of the roofscape. The form, scale and design dominate the simple form of the existing roof and is an overly prominent and unduly dominant addition that appears incongruous and harms the perception and significance of the character and appearance of the dwellings within the PCA. In its context it does not represent a high quality of design.
 11. For these reasons, the proposal fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the PCA. It therefore conflicts with Policies DH1, DH3, DH (a) and DH (h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 ('CS'), the Residential Extensions, Basement and Conversion Guidance Supplementary Planning Document and Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016. Amongst other things and when taken as a whole, these require a high quality of design and that new roof extensions respect the scale and character of the host building and the surrounding area and protects and enhances heritage assets.
 12. In the context of the Framework, the proposal causes less than substantial harm to significance of the PCA. In carrying out the balancing exercise required

² Page 51.

by paragraph 134 of the Framework and on the evidence before me, the public benefits of 2 additional rooms and a more energy efficient dwelling do not outweigh the considerable weight and importance I give to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the significance of the heritage asset.

Other Matters

13. My attention has been drawn to a number of what the appellant contends are similar developments within the locality that set a precedent for the proposal. Whilst I accept there may well be roof alterations in the wider area, of the examples given only 2 are within the PCA and whilst one is in the same road, it is not within the PCA and also appears to be of some age³. Because such development is subject to different planning considerations and judgements it therefore does not alter my view in relation to the main issue.
14. At No. 26 Old Mill Road⁴ and No. 27 Wernbrook Street⁵ which are within the PCA, it appears that the developments are of a different form, are smaller and in the case of the latter is not as conspicuous from public areas given the siting of the host property. Furthermore, in both cases I have not been provided with the full details and therefore cannot be certain that the considerations and judgements are directly comparable to the appeal proposal before me. In any event each case must be considered on its own merits and these other examples within the PCA do not alter my view in relation to the main issue.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above the proposal conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole and the Framework. Material considerations do not indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Aston

INSPECTOR

³ LPA ref: 03/2563/CP.

⁴ LPA ref: 14/2175/F.

⁵ LPA ref: 16/2568/F.