



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2017

by C Cresswell BSc (Hons) MA MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/17/3177091
547-549 Norwood Road, London SE27 9DL

- 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 J Taylor against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/05175/FUL, dated 25 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is formation of a mansard roof extension to provide one bedroom apartment.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues in this case are:
 - whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Norwood Conservation Area.
 - whether the proposal would provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers having particular regard to internal living space and outdoor amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal concerns an older style property which faces a busy shopping area in Norwood Road. It has a ground floor commercial unit (occupied by London Decorators Merchants) with the upper storeys in residential use. The property is part of the West Norwood Conservation Area, the significance of which is mainly derived from the quality of the historic buildings.
4. While the front elevation of the appeal property is somewhat dominated by the contemporary shopfront and associated signage, the upper storeys maintain a more traditional appearance in keeping with the neighbouring properties. The rear elevation of the building can be seen from Chestnut Road and some other vantage points. From here, the profile of the butterfly roof is a particularly distinctive feature. As such, the appeal property makes a direct contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.

5. The plans show that the proposed apartment would be accessed from a doorway on the Norwood Road street frontage. I understand that permission was previously granted in 2011 for an aluminium door whilst permission was granted for a wooden panel door in 2016¹. Whilst the current proposal is for an aluminium door in the style of that permitted in 2011, relatively few details of the proposed design have been submitted.
6. Although the doorway would be a relatively small feature in the context of the Conservation Area, it would nonetheless be visually exposed on the frontage of the building. Despite the functional appearance of the adjacent shopfronts, it seems to me that a timber style door would be more compatible with the otherwise traditional appearance of the building. If I were minded to allow the appeal, a condition could be imposed requiring further details of the doorway to be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
7. The proposed dormer to the rear would be a more substantial feature. Due to its open aspect, the rear elevation of the property is clearly visible in parts of Chestnut Road when approaching Norwood Road. I recognise that the dormer would be set back from the rear elevation and therefore the pattern of the butterfly roof would still be distinguishable. However, as the dormer would bridge the space across the open parts of the roof it would alter its profile so that it would appear less traditional in character. The architectural integrity of the roof would be disrupted, undermining its historic qualities.
8. The existing extension to the Barclays Bank building has a much greater impact on the appearance of the terrace than the appeal proposal would. However, the butterfly roof remains a distinctive feature of the Chestnut Road street scene despite the existing extension and the presence of other contemporary buildings and structures in the area. In my view, the proposed dormer would represent an incremental change to the street scene which would partially erode the significance of the Conservation Area. In reaching this decision, I am mindful that the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a heritage asset, 'great weight' should be given to the asset's conservation.
9. Nonetheless, the harm I have identified would be less than substantial (as defined in the Framework) and paragraph 134 advises that this harm should be weighed against any public benefits. While the proposed development would make a small contribution to housing supply in the area, this would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to the heritage asset.
10. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The development would conflict with Policies Q5, Q11 and Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 (the Local Plan) which promote local distinctiveness and appropriate standards of design.

Living conditions

11. There is some dispute between the parties regarding the proposed floorspace of the apartment and therefore its compatibility with the London Plan Housing Standards (2016). I find the evidence submitted in this regard to be inconclusive. Nonetheless, it seems to me that the proposed bedroom would

¹ Council Ref: 11/02630/FUL and 16/01435/FUL

- be unacceptably small, especially considering that there appears to be little room for furniture (such as a wardrobe or dressing table).
12. While the proposed living area and kitchen is relatively spacious in comparison, this would need to accommodate most of the storage requirements of the occupiers given the lack of space elsewhere. Considering that a one bedroom apartment could accommodate two individuals, the kitchen and living area has potential to become somewhat cramped.
 13. No private outdoor space is proposed. My attention has been drawn to the Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance 2016 which indicates that in exceptional circumstances, additional internal living space may be provided equivalent to the open space requirement. The appellant argues that the total internal floorspace would exceed recommended standards and would be sufficient to accommodate the equivalent private outdoor living space requirement. However, even if I were to accept that the total floorspace of the apartment would be 56m² as indicated on the plans, I have found that the configuration of the accommodation would lead to it being cramped. As such, the internal floorspace of the apartment would not successfully compensate for the lack of outdoor private amenity space in this particular case.
 14. Although provision of cycle and refuse storage facilities could be secured by a planning condition, it is not clear from the plans exactly where these would be located. In the absence of such information, there can be no certainty that these facilities could be successfully accommodated on the site in the event of a condition being imposed. While the appellant argues that only a small area for refuse storage needs to be provided as there are regular collections, there can be no certainty that the collection service will necessarily continue to be run on such a regular basis in perpetuity.
 15. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would not provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers. There would be conflict with Policies H5 and Q2 of the Local Plan. These require appropriate standards of amenity. There would also be conflict with Policy Q12 of the Local Plan which requires adequate provision for refuse storage, together with Policy Q13 of the Local Plan and Policy 6.9 of the London Plan 2015 which require adequate provision for cycle storage. Furthermore, the proposal would not comply with a core principle of the Framework which seeks to always provide a good standard of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Cresswell

INSPECTOR