

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11th September 2017

by Alison Roland BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/D/17/3179030
36 Blondin Street, London, E3 2TR.

- 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 Winston Raggatt against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref: PA/17/00484 dated 20 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 27 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 2 dormer extensions on the front elevation and one dormer extension on the rear elevation. Replacing all existing glazing with high performance triple-glazed UPVC frame windows, and the installation of 2 glazed roof lights to rear dormer.
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Procedural Matter

1. The description cited in the header above replicates that cited on the planning application form. During the course of the application the proposal was amended to rooflights on the front elevation, dormer to rear roof slope and installation of triple glazed UPVC frame windows and I shall determine the appeal accordingly.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the dormer to the rear roof slope. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to rooflights on the front elevation and installation of triple glazed UPVC frame windows and planning permission is granted for the same, at 36 Blondin Street, London, E3 2TR, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: PA/17/00484, dated 20 February 2017 and the plans submitted with it (so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted) and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 214-100 - Site Location Plan; 214-110 - Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan; 214-111 - Existing Ground Floor Plan; 214-112 - Existing First Floor Plan; 214-113 - Existing Second Floor Plan; 214-114 - Existing Roof Plan; 214-120 - Existing Front And Rear Elevation; 214-130 - Existing Section A-A; 214-131 - Existing Section B-B; 214-201 A - Proposed Ground Floor Plan; 214-202 A -
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Proposed First Floor Plan; 214-203 B - Proposed Second Floor Plan; 214-204 C - Proposed Loft Plan; 214-206 C - Proposed Roof Plan; 214-220 C - Proposed Front And Rear Elevation; 214-230 A - Proposed Section A-A ; 214-231 C - Proposed Section B-B; 214-232 B - Proposed Section C-C; 214-200 A - Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The CA is defined by its mixed character, with a strongly industrial feel bordering the railway and a more typically residential character to the South, East of Fairfield Road. The Fairfield Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines draw attention to the fact that the northern part of the CA is dominated by a substantial former mill complex, the Bryant and May Match Works Factory which is Grade II Listed. Blondin Street lies to the North and is comprised substantially of modern terraced housing and flats with a smaller group of older terraces at its eastern end.
5. The appeal property stands in the midst of a terrace which has an uncompromisingly modern design and materials palette. The properties across the opposite side of the road whilst of differing design, are also modern and feature extensive use of metalwork to balconies, as well as unusual flat roofed metal entrance porches.
6. In this context of contemporary properties, the proposed front roof lights would not look out of place. The larger of the two would broadly align with the full height glazed strip which stands to one side of the entrance door and whilst the smaller one would not directly align with the windows beneath, the degree of asymmetry would be minimal and insufficient to draw the eye. They would to my mind amount to an unremarkable addition to this contemporary property and sited on this elevated roof slope in a street with a strong sense of enclosure to either side, would not be prominent viewed from the public domain, although they would be clearly visible from the properties opposite.
7. However, I take a different view in relation to the proposed rear dormer. Whilst I take the appellant's point that its lead cladding and asymmetric glass splinter render it of more interest than a typical box dormer, the fact is that it would introduce a significant degree of built form onto a roof which is otherwise devoid of such structures. It would thus appear as an oddity in the wide unbroken expanse of roof scape which characterise this and the adjoining terraced block. Whatever view one takes about the aesthetic merits of these blocks, the fact is that other than a modest solar installation on the adjoining property, they do not feature roof additions and have a very consistent appearance.
8. Whilst I did see some dormers on properties at the Western end of Blondin Street visible from Menai Place and a mansard type addition to the property at the junction of Blondin Street with Fairfield Road, there is a greater diversity in house types at that particular location and the properties do not share the same consistency in style as the appeal site. The context is thus not comparable.

9. I also accept that the rear of the appeal site is effectively a private gated area and not open to the public. Nonetheless, from the number of parked cars thereon, it is clearly frequented by a large number of people and the proposed dormer would be particularly strident when viewed from the upper floors of the buildings to the South East.
10. The rear dormer would thus introduce an obtrusive addition to the rear roof which would fail to satisfactorily integrate with the host property and wider terrace of which it forms part. This element of the proposal would thus fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. This would bring it into conflict with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016), Policy SP10 of the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2025 (2010) and Policies DM24 and DM27 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan Managing Development Document Development Plan Document (2013). These seek to secure high quality design which is sensitive to and enhances the local character and setting of the development and protects and enhances the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas. I appreciate the proposal would enhance the accommodation at this property, but nonetheless consider the harm identified would outweigh any benefit in this regard.
11. The Council take no exception to the proposed triple glazing and I have no reason to either. In addition, despite my conclusions in relation to the rear dormer, I have found that the proposed front roof lights would amount to a minor and inconsequential addition to the property. As these elements of the proposal are clearly divisible from the remainder, I shall issue a split decision dismissing the appeal in relation to the dormer, but allowing the balance of the development.
12. In addition to the standard time limit for commencement of development, a condition confining the approval to specified plans is necessary for certainty. The Council also suggest a matching materials condition, which is inappropriate due to the materials specified.

ALISON ROLAND

INSPECTOR