

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/A5840/D/17/3179299

13 Brunswick Quay, Southwark, London, SE16 7PU.

- 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 Chad Eggelton against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref: 17/AP/1117, dated 20 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is conversion of roof space with dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the implications of the proposal for (1) the character and appearance of the area and (2) whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers in terms of internal ceiling heights.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a modern 3 storey brick built terraced property situated within an estate of similar terraced blocks. The proposal would see the introduction of a large dormer spanning either side of the roof, which has a gable facing the road. It would be inset by 1 metre from both front and rear elevations of the dwelling and clad in matching roof tiles.
 4. I take the appellants point that the height of the terrace means that a significant part of the roof is concealed from public view. Nonetheless, the front and rear facing gables of the terraced block impart a strong sense of symmetry and rhythm to its appearance and these would be disrupted through the addition of the proposed dormer, which would be visible from wider vantage points other than immediately in front of the property. These include to the East along Brunswick Quay, as well as from the car parking and service yard to the rear of the property. It would also be markedly more visible from the upper floors of several properties opposite. From these vantage points the proposal would appear as an incongruous and boxy addition to its roof, which would appear all the more out of place due the composed design theme of the
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buildings on Brunswick Quay which exhibit a strong uniformity. The fact it would be clad in matching roof tiles would not overcome the inconsistency of its form.

5. I thus conclude in relation to the first main issue that the proposal would fail to integrate satisfactorily with the appearance of the host property and would in consequence detract from the wider character and appearance of the area. This would bring it into conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) (LP), Policies 3.12 and 3.13 of the Southwark Plan (2007) (SP), Policy 12 of the Core Strategy (2011) (CS) and the 2015 Technical Update to the Residential Design Standards (2011) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). These seek to secure the highest possible standards for design in new development, that is appropriate to and harmonises with the local context.
6. In relation to the second main issue, the Council put the internal floor to ceiling height of the proposed accommodation at 1.9 metres whereas the appellant puts it at 2.05 metres. From my examination of the plans, the Council's estimate appears more accurate. Either way, both would fall significantly short of the guidance in the SPD, which seeks to secure a minimum room height of 2.3 metres over at least half of the floor area for habitable rooms in attics.
7. I note the appellant's assertion that the rooms would be utilised as storage space and not living accommodation. However, whilst that may well be the intention, were the development to go ahead, the subsequent use of the space as living accommodation for example by a different occupier, would be difficult if not impossible to prohibit or indeed detect. Moreover, as the rooms are comparable in floor space with the existing habitable rooms in the property, I consider there would be a real prospect that they would be so utilised at some point in time.
8. In my view, the shortfall in ceiling height would be significant and would render the accommodation therein somewhat oppressive and lacking a sense of space. This would bring the proposal into conflict with the standards in the SPD, Policy 7 of the CS and Policy 3.5 of the LP, as well as the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. These seek to ensure that residential accommodation achieves good quality living conditions both internally and externally. However, Policy 4.2 of the SP which relates to new residential development is not relevant to the appeal.

ALISON ROLAND

INSPECTOR