



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2017

by Beverley Doward BSc BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/D/17/3179444

84 Grove Park, London, SE5 8LE

- 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 Dr Emilyn Claid against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref 17/AP/0992, dated 10 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is the removal of existing roof covering (front and rear) and roof structure (front part and rear). Increased height of existing side and rear wall facade and new shallow pitch roof to rear to form new increased loft room space including shower room/WC and main studio space. New front facing dormer window mirroring neighbours existing dormer in location and scale. Windows to studio and WC/shower room to rear with roof light above staircase on rear face of roof. Existing small chimney removed and capped-off. New internal stair from first floor level to accommodate proposals.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Dr Emilyn Claid against the Council of the London Borough of Southwark. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building, the street scene and the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site consists of a two storey dwelling within a residential area. The dwelling is the middle property in a row of three properties. From the evidence before me it would appear to originally have been one of a pair of semi-detached properties (No 83 forming the other half) but was later adjoined to the property to the south (No 82) by a side extension to No 82. The appeal property has a hipped roof whilst the original hipped roof of No 83 has been extended by a front dormer and side/rear mansard-style dormers. No 82 has a somewhat unusual roof form differing from both the appeal property and No 83.

5. The appeal site lies within the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area (CGCA). The Camberwell Grove Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) for London Borough of Southwark 2003 indicates that the great majority of buildings in the conservation area are residential and that whilst the predominant type is three and four storey brick or stuccoed terraces of houses dating from late 18th/early 19th century there are also two storey brick or stucco villas or pairs from the 19th century and two storey brick houses built with arts and craft/English revival influence as at Grove Park.
6. The CAA identifies Grove Park as a sub-area within the CGCA which is characterised by late 19th/early 20th speculative development with building styles and garden planting that evoke the native countryside rather than the city. From what I saw on my site visit I agree with this assessment although I also observed that within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, a number of properties, including the appeal property, are of more recent construction and are not consistent in their style. These more modern groupings of properties are nevertheless of a modest scale and are generally well-spaced thereby maintaining the spacious low rise character of the conservation area.
7. The CAA states that roof extensions and changes to the basic roof form are generally unacceptable. However, in this case the Council indicates that it does not object in principle to the introduction of dormer extensions to the appeal property given the existing side/rear and front dormer extensions to the adjoining property at No 83 but rather that it is the detail of the proposed extensions having regard to their size, scale and design that is of concern.
8. As indicated above the appeal property was originally one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings and notwithstanding its subsequent attachment to the adjacent dwelling at No 82 or the alterations to the hipped roof form of No 83 it still appears very much as one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings that share a hipped roof form. This is particularly so when viewed along Grove Park from the south.
9. The appellant indicates that the proposed hip-to-gable roof extension element of the proposal is necessary to accommodate a staircase that complies with current Building Regulations. However, it would significantly increase the volume of the roof and appear as a bulky and dominant extension which would unbalance the roof form and detract from the appearance of the host dwelling and the adjoining dwelling at No 83 to the overall detriment of the street scene. In this respect it would fail to comply with the Council's 2015 Technical Update to the Residential Design Standards (2011) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which indicates the various circumstances where roof extensions will not be permitted. These include where it would cut through ridge or hip lines and where it would unbalance the proportions of the building.
10. As a part of the proposed hip-to-gable roof extension there would be an additional storey to the existing two-storey flat roofed side wing of the dwelling to form part of the rear extension at second floor level. This would reduce the visual separation between the roof of the appeal property and the adjoining property at No 82 and lead to a terracing effect which would fail to respect the generally spacious low rise character of the conservation area.
11. The scale and positioning of the front dormer would accord with the requirements set out in the Council's SPD in so far as it would be set down from the ridge of the main house, in from either side of the roof slope and in

from the eaves. It would also reflect that of the dormer at No 83. However, any element of visual unity provided by this element of the proposal would not overcome my concerns referred to above regarding the adverse effect on the visual unity of the appeal property and its neighbour at No 83 caused by the proposed hip-to-gable roof extension element of the proposal.

12. The removal of the eaves of the existing rear roof slope in order to facilitate the proposed rear extension at second floor level would result in the appearance of an additional storey to the property. This would significantly alter the proportions of the rear of the property and appear as an over dominant extension. It would also fail to comply with the advice in the Council's SPD relating to roof window extensions which indicates that dormer windows should generally be set down from the ridge of the main house, in from either side of the roof slope and in from the eaves, that they should not dominate the rear elevation of the property and be designed to sit well within the original roof slope and that they should not normally be wider than they are high or occupy more than 20% of the area of the roof.
13. Having regard to all of the above therefore, I consider that having regard to its size, scale and design the proposed development would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the host building, the street scene and the conservation area. Accordingly, the proposal would also fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CGCA.
14. The harm to the CGCA would be "less than substantial" as set out in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The appellant indicates that the proposed development, by offering a gable end to the neighbouring property at No 82, would facilitate the extension of that property to provide a good sized family home for which there is a need in the Borough. However, I consider that any public benefits in this respect would not outweigh the harm identified above.
15. For the reasons stated the proposed development would conflict with saved policies 3.12 and 3.13 of the Southwark Plan 2007 and policies 7.4, 7.6 of the London Plan The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (March 2015) (the London Plan) which collectively seek to ensure developments achieve a high quality of design and have regard to local character. In addition it would fail to comply with the advice in the Council's SPD in relation to roof extensions and roof window extensions. The proposed development would fail to accord with policies 3.15 and 3.16 of the Southwark Plan, Strategic Policy 12 of the Southwark Council Core Strategy 2011 and policy 7.8 of the London Plan which respectively seek to ensure that development preserves or enhances the special interest or historic character or appearance of buildings or areas of historic or architectural significance, preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas, preserves or enhances Southwark's historic environment and seeks to ensure that development affecting heritage assets and their settings conserve their significance by being sympathetic to, amongst other things, their form and scale. Furthermore, it would be contrary to the principles of requiring good design and conserving and enhancing the historic environment indicated in the Framework.

Other matters

16. The appellant indicates that there are a number of roof conversions within the CGCA. However, I have not been provided with the specific details of these and therefore cannot be satisfied that the circumstances are the same as in this case. The appellant also refers to a hip-to-gable conversion which was permitted by the Council within the CGCA and which, it is suggested, provides a precedent for the appeal proposal. However, the Council indicates that in this case the property in question was a detached villa standing mid-way along a row of properties with gable end roofs. It seems to me therefore that the circumstances in this particular case are somewhat different to the appeal proposal as a hip-to-gable conversion would not have unbalanced the appearance of the properties to either side. I have dealt with the appeal proposal on its own merits having regard to the specific context of the site and its surroundings and relevant local and national planning policy.
17. I note that the appellant sought to actively engage with her neighbours during the development of the proposal. I also note the submitted expressions of support for the proposal. However, these do not serve to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
18. The appellant has raised some concerns about the information/advice provided by the Council's Planning Officer to the appellant during consideration of the application. However, this is not a matter for me to comment upon or consider as part of an appeal made under Section 78 of the above Act.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Beverley Doward

INSPECTOR