

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 April 2019

by Steven Hartley BA (Hons) Dist.TP (Manc) DMS MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Decision date: 8th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/19/3221814

60 Lanercost Road, London SW2 3DN

- 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 Barking Ltd against the decision of Lambeth Council.
 - The application Ref 18/03840/FUL dated 4 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2018.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable loft extension and the addition of a rear dormer inset within the rear roof slope and terrace.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the submission of the appeal, an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) (the Framework) has been published by the Government. This is a material consideration in planning decisions. In relation to the main issue below, Government policy has not materially changed and it was not therefore necessary to invite any further comments from the different parties involved.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area generally.

Reasons

4. The area is characterised by substantial residential properties where the use of similar external materials, similar heights and mass, and front amenity spaces give a unifying character and appearance, even though there are detailed differences of design between them. Most of the dwellings are semi-detached. Some have gables and others have hipped roofs.
 5. Whilst each block of properties varies to some extent from the others in the road, the above features nonetheless contribute to the overall character and appearance of the area by creating a harmonious design.
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6. The proposed development would include a rear dormer which the LPA considers to be out of character with the area because of its size and design, though this is not included in the reasons for refusal. However, the rear of the dwelling is not apparent in the street scene or from any public vantage point and for this reason it would not have a significant and adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.
7. The proposed development would include two rooflights on the front elevation to the building which the LPA considers would, by their size and siting on the roof slope and a lack of vertical alignment with the windows below, be poor design. However, the two windows, one immediately above the other, would generally align with the window and entrance porch beneath. While they would have a different shape to the other windows in the building, including the one immediately beneath, they would be modest in size, would be flat to the roof slope and would not be over conspicuous. They would not, when viewed in the context of the overall design of the building, have a significantly adverse impact on the building or on the character and appearance of the area.
8. The proposed development has a hipped roof, as does the dwellinghouse abutting it. The appellant refers to a tree in the neighbouring front garden which he considers obscures the external appearance of the building, especially the roof, so that the semi-detached dwellings do not read as a prominent identical pair of properties in the street scene. However, on my site visit, I was able to see that the tree had been removed.
9. The appellant considers that if the property was still one dwelling it would be possible, under permitted development rights, for loft conversions, including hip to gable enlargements, to be utilised. However, even if that were to be the case, it is recognised by the appellant that no such permitted rights apply to apartments. I have therefore afforded this matter insignificant weight.
10. The appellant also notes that there is a mix of houses in the area with gables and those with hipped roofs and that these adjoin each other. Moreover, the property is not listed or in a conservation area. However, while the appellant considers that there are numerous examples nearby where one half of a pair of semi-detached houses has had alterations which differentiate it from its attached property, I found on my site visit that most of the matching pairs of semi-detached houses in the immediate vicinity have one form of roof detail or the other: this gives them a symmetry despite detailed variations in their overall design.
11. The proposed development would unbalance the particular pair of semi-detached houses by having a gable and a hipped roof, to the detriment of the appeal building and the character and appearance of the area. This is a matter to which I give substantial weight.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to the aims of the London Plan 2016 (LP), and to policy 7.4 of the LP where existing buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of a place should be allowed to influence its future character. It would also be contrary to policies

7.5 and 7.6 of the LP which stress the need for good design and for proposed developments to be appropriate to their context.

13. Furthermore, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to policy Q5 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 (LLP) which aims to support local distinctiveness and architectural detailing. It would also be contrary to policy Q8 of the LLP which requires development to create attractive roofscapes and with policy Q11 of the LLP which requires that alterations respond to original roof forms.
14. In addition, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to the Lambeth Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2015, which reiterates that the Council would normally resist changes to roofs which would be detrimental to their appearance.

Other matters

15. The proposed development would create a family sized unit and would thus contribute to the housing needs of the Borough. However, I have been given no information as to the exact housing needs of the area, and in any event, this matter does not overcome my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, and taking account of all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Steven Hartley

INSPECTOR