



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2019

by Michael Wood RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/19/3222424

89 Balham Park Road, London, SW12 8EB

- 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 Maha Saif and Mr Giles Goodfellow against London Borough of Wandsworth Council.
 - The application Ref 2018/5392 dated 12 November 2018 was refused by notice dated 05 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is alterations including erection of front and side dormers to main roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

1. The appeal follows the grant of planning permission under Ref 2018/1183 for alterations which includes dormer windows to each side of the main roof. These have been constructed and were visible from the street on my site visit. Approval was also given to the insertion of a flush conservation area specification rooflight to the front roof slope. The Appeal seeks permission for a front dormer window to be constructed in its place.
2. A similar appeal has been submitted Ref 3219394 which shows a different size and design of the proposed front dormer window.
3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host dwelling and the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within Wandsworth Common Conservation Area. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
5. Balham Park Road has a collection of strikingly designed Victorian villas. Whilst there is consistency to their scale and form, there are numerous variations to the external features of the house types which add character and interest to the streetscene. The houses are generally well preserved examples of their time. The architectural character derives from good proportions and symmetry. The composition of the streetscene is a collection of interesting and related windows, bays, impressive doors and porches. Texture and balance have been

brought to the decorative brick facades. Some of the facades have been painted but still appear to belonging to the group. The strong sense of place is evident even though there are variations in colour, texture and form.

6. Whilst there are roof alterations, extensions have generally been restricted to the rear of houses. There are houses nearby with gable ends but the majority have hipped roofs. The traditional way of introducing daylight to roof spaces of houses in the area has been from rooflights inset into the plane of the roof.
7. I could see, from the street, on my site visit that there were dormer window extensions to the front of a few houses in the road. These were a discordant feature and a threat to the character and harmonious appearance of the streetscene. The construction of the proposed dormer window in this appeal would lead to a significant change in the character and appearance of the host house. There would be an unacceptable, adverse, cumulative impact on the streetscene.
8. The Appellants have compared the volume of the extension to the volume of the original roof and while this is a small increase, the size of the dormer would be a significant visual feature on the front elevation and discordant in the street scene when observed from below. I have considered the revised design which the Appellant has submitted together with the reasoning behind the changes. I do not consider that the changes would outweigh the harmful effect of the proposed dormer extension.
9. Policy DMS2 of the Wandsworth Development Management Policies Document of 2016 (the WDMPD) seeks to manage the historic environment. Policy DMH5 seeks to avoid alterations and extensions which would harm a building's appearance or the streetscene. The Wandsworth Common Conservation Area Appraisal points out that conservation areas are designated to help preserve or reinstate the original features that give the conservation area its special character. Significant changes to the original appearance which makes a house stand out against the grain of its neighbours, will inevitably harm the appearance of the group of which it is a component part. The cumulative effect of these changes in turn harms the appearance of the area as a whole.
10. I find that the development of the front dormer window extension shown on drawing 005A would be inappropriate and out of character with the design of the houses in the immediate neighbourhood. I note, from the drawing and from the Planning Design and Heritage Statement that the dormer would be relatively small, sympathetically designed and detailed in relation to the host building with the use of complimentary materials. However, the dormer window extension would be a discordant feature in the road and would not contribute to enhancing or preserving the character or appearance of the conservation area. Therefore, I conclude that the development would be contrary to policies DMS2 and DMH5 of the WDMPD.
11. In considering the harm which the development of a front dormer window extension would bring to the conservation area I give considerable weight to preserving the existing setting and appearance. I find that, whilst the harm would be less than substantial, this must be weighed against any public benefit from the proposal and no such benefit has been put forward. The overall effect on the historic environment would be harmful.

Other Matters

12. The Appellants have referred to two examples of similar proposals for dormer extensions in conservation areas which have been allowed on appeal. One relates to a pair of semi detached houses where the adjoining house already had a dormer window and the other relates to a road where front dormers were already fitted to most of the houses. I therefore conclude that neither of these appeals are directly comparable to the present case. In sensitive historic settings, where considerable importance and weight must be given to the conservation of character or appearance, they cannot be considered to set a precedent.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Michael Wood

INSPECTOR