



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2019

by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/19/3232665

First floor flat, 149 Gleneagle Road, London SW16 6AZ

- 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 Edward Mann against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/00209/FUL, dated 15 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as the erection of a rear dormer roof extension including two rear dormer windows and one French door with glass balustrade together with side dormer to rear outrigger roof slope including one side dormer window plus installation of three front and one rear rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the building and its locality.

Reasons

3. The character of the immediate area is defined by long two-storey Victorian residential terraces set behind front gardens with consistent plot widths and common architectural detailing. The dwellings feature large paired rear outriggers with modest private rear gardens beyond. The appeal property is an upper floor flat located towards the south-western end of the road where the rear gardens back on to a railway embankment.
4. The proposed rear roof extension would be formed of two adjoining elements: a traditionally proportioned rear-facing mansard extension covering the primary rear roof slope; and, a side-facing mansard covering approximately half of the secondary roof slope of the outrigger. Whilst there are relatively few examples of roof extensions in the immediate locality, rear mansards and dormer extensions are visible in the wider area and generally provide simple additive forms sufficient to retain the integrity of the original architecture.
5. However, in combination, the proposed extensions would result in a form of development that would appear as a confused single entity. By virtue of the various roof elements, orientations, heights, pitches and irregular projections, they would add significant bulk and appear visually discordant with the existing building. Notwithstanding that the return element would only cover about half the roof of the outrigger, the combined scale would be substantial and at direct odds with both the advice and examples of acceptable forms of roof extension

provided within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document relating to Building Alterations and Extensions (2015).

6. Whilst the variation in the scale and proportioning of the openings would add to the architectural clutter this would not be determinative in itself. Despite its elevation, the proposed door opening would reflect the scale of openings on the rear of the building and therefore not appear out of place. The light touch of the glazed balustrade would not be visually dominant. However, together, the scale and arrangement of the extensions would appear at odds with the character of the building and dominate the roofscape as an incongruous form of development. This would draw focus from the existing simplicity of the dwelling in its terrace setting and result in significant harm to the character of the existing building.
7. During summer months views of the roof extensions would be limited. However, due to the seasonal nature of the majority of the vegetation screening to the rear of the site and the higher elevation of the adjacent railway, views of the development and the rear of the wider terrace would be available from the public realm for a large part of the year. By virtue of their scale, high position and appearance the rear extensions would be prominent and detract from the visual quality of what is a locally distinct building type of substantially consistent character.
8. The proposed rooflights to the front roof slope are not features original to the locality. However, they would appear as subordinate elements with little projection above the plane of the forward roof slope. Their positions, scale and number would be such that they would be visible along Gleneagle Road but would not dominate the original roofscape in a manner to undermine its form or detract from the architectural integrity of the building, or that of the wider terrace group. Within the locality there are numerous examples of similar alterations such that they would not appear as incongruous elements or undermine its prevailing character.

Other Matters

9. In support of the appeal, my attention was drawn to other properties in the area that have already been extended in a similar manner to that proposed and I saw these during my site visit. However, these are very much in the minority and, in any case, the existence of development elsewhere does not represent an appropriate reason to find in favour of a proposal that would cause harm or lead me to alter my findings on this issue.
10. It is highlight that similar development could be erected under permitted development rights for a single dwellinghouse and therefore the design standard required should be assessed having regard to the small scale and uncontentious nature of forms of development allowed under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (GPDO). An appeal¹ decision is provided where this approach was applied. However, on close reading, that instance related to a simple form of development rather than a combined extension over two perpendicular roof slopes. Furthermore, it was located in an area where other similar examples were present close by. On that occasion the Inspector found no harm arising from the common form of development concluding that it would be neither

¹ APP/G5750/D/17/3168144

incongruous nor intrusive. A similar approach was taken in appeal ref APP/N5660/D/15/3003976.

11. The proposed design in this instance is neither a common or simple form of extension and would not be consistent with other examples of roof additions visible in the immediate locality. Although it may be possible that a similar style of extension could be erected under the terms of the GDPO, this does not negate the requirement under s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Moreover, due to the incongruous nature of development in contrast to the cases referenced and that no fall-back position arising from the provisions of the GPDO is available at the application site because it is a flat, the circumstances described attract limited weight and would not, in this instance, outweigh the requirements or primacy of the development plan in relation to the rear extension.
12. Notwithstanding the above, I conclude that the combined proposed rear roof extensions would appear incongruous and cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building and its locality. It would therefore conflict with Policies Q2, Q5, Q8 and Q11 of the London Borough of Lambeth Local Plan (2015) and the Council's supplementary Planning Document on Building Alterations and Extensions which, amongst other things, seek to preserve the character and appearance of buildings and local distinctive areas through appropriate design.
13. The appellant advises that the development would give rise to significant improvements to the family living conditions. However, whilst acknowledging the benefits that would result in this respect, these are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR