

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2019

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/19/3230275

40 St Johns Park, Blackheath, London SE3 7JH

- 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 Mrs Amanda Birrell against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0183/HD, dated 16 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is a ground floor wrap around extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a ground floor wrap around extension at 40 St Johns Park, Blackheath, London SE3 7JH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/0183/HD, dated 16 January 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: M1820\001 F2, M1820\100 F3, M1820\101 F2, M1820\105 F2, M1820\110 F3, M1820\115 F2 and M1820\116 F2.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development used above has been taken from the planning application form. The council used a different description and in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application above, albeit with some unnecessary description removed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and locally listed buildings.

Reasons

4. The appeal site sits within a group of semi-detached dwellings that are largely consistent in terms of scale and appearance, with three storey frontages and two storey bay windows facing, but set well back from, the tree lined street of St Johns Park. The rear elevation features a 3 storey outrigger with a 2 storey bay window.
5. The site is located within the Blackheath Conservation Area. The Blackheath Conservation Area Appraisal identifies that the Conservation Area consists of a mostly residential environment that is dominated by spacious and well landscaped roads that reflect the suburban growth of London in the 19th century. St Johns Park Road itself is identified as being a spine road within the Victorian estate which is dominated by the adjacent church and is surrounded by substantial and formally arranged townhouses and villas. As a proposal falling within a Conservation Area, I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
6. 34 to 48 St Johns Park form a locally listed group of buildings. Their significance is derived from their appearance as a group, with a consistent appearance to the front that includes distinctive bay windows and architectural detailing. The locally listed buildings feature some variation to the rear as an extension, roof additions, raised terraces and painted walls were visible from the appeal site. Furthermore, whilst outriggers are a consistent feature, they are not uniform in appearance and position, as demonstrated at the neighbouring pair of 42 and 44 St Johns Park where the outriggers are on the opposite side of the rear elevations and neither feature bay windows to the rear.
7. The proposed single storey extension would project to the rear of both the main part of the dwelling and the outrigger, thereby wrapping around the outrigger and being of equal width as the main part of the existing dwelling. The extension would feature a flat roof built to 2 different heights, with the rearmost part being lower to enable the retention of the first-floor part of the bay. Due to its positioning at the rear of the site and the presence of surrounding buildings, the extension would not be visible from St Johns Park and any views from Vicarage Avenue would be at a substantial distance with intervening boundary treatments, sheds and extensive landscaping making views of the extension particularly difficult to achieve.
8. Although the outrigger and bay projection at the rear of the dwelling would be surrounded by the extension, they would still be able to be appreciated as part of the original dwelling. Therefore, the 'L' shaped form of the original dwelling would still be able to be understood from the few private vantage points where the rear of the dwelling can be seen. Furthermore, although the footprint of the extension would be large relative to the host building, due to its simple form and low height, the extension is subservient in appearance and does not cause material harm to the plan form of the original dwelling.
9. The presence of bay windows at both front and rear elevations does not make them both equally important to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, especially given the absence of bay windows at the rear of 42 and 44 St Johns Park. The pair of bays are not able to be seen in the same view due to the presence of the main part of the dwelling and as such the similarity is not an element of the building that contributes to the significance of the heritage assets. Accordingly, I consider that causing the bays to have a different appearance does not alter the heritage significance of the existing building or the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area. I also find that the inclusion of large windows on

the rear elevation would not detract from the contribution of the building to the Conservation Area or the locally listed group of buildings.

10. A similar development has been approved and built at 36 St Johns Park. Although the Council's Residential Extensions Guidance¹ (SPD) was not adopted at that time, the requirement existed for development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The guidance within the SPD, which requires that extensions respect the original architectural features and detailing of the host dwelling, does not represent a substantial change to the requirement of the other policies that appear to have been in place at the time that the other proposal was assessed. I therefore consider that the changes in policies are not sufficient to render the other development irrelevant in this case and as such I afford weight to the presence of a comparable extension in terms of the existing appearance of the Conservation Area and the group of buildings.
11. Furthermore, whilst the dimensions of the two extensions are different, the resultant built form would be similar and therefore, by replicating another extension to a similar, locally listed dwelling within the Conservation Area, I find that the proposed extension preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and does not cause harm to its significance. Likewise, the effect of the proposal on the locally listed buildings would be comparable and therefore no harm would be caused to the non-designated heritage assets.
12. For the reasons given above, the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the group of locally listed buildings. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies DH1, DH3, DH(h) and DH(j) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan – Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) which combine to require that development pays special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and locally listed buildings and also represents high quality design that takes account of the architecture of surrounding buildings.
13. The proposal also accords with policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016) which require that development, amongst other things, is of the highest architectural quality, complements local architectural character, is informed by the surrounding historic environment and conserves the significance of heritage assets by being of sympathetic scale, form, materials and architectural detail.
14. Although policy DH4 has been referred to in the reason for refusal, I do not find that the proposal would have an effect on the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site.

Other Matter

15. Whilst an interested party has raised concern with regard to the effect of the development on the outlook from within a neighbouring property, due to the low height of the extension and its projection relative to the neighbouring property, the proposal would not have an unduly harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.

Conclusion and Conditions

16. For the reasons given, the appeal is allowed subject to the conditions set out above. I have attached a condition to require the development to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted plans in the interests of clarity. Another condition requires the development to be undertaken utilising materials that match the

¹ Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (July 2016).

existing dwelling in the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the locality and the heritage assets that are discussed above.

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR