



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2019

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/19/3233574
168 Waters Road, London SE6 1UQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Plamen Konov against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/19/110883, dated 6 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as the construction of a double side extension and part single part double rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and on the Waters Road street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey brick house with a tiled hipped roof, sitting at the end of a terrace of six similar houses. Although alterations have been made to features such as porches and windows, the terrace is symmetrical in its general appearance. This broad symmetry is also a characteristic of the other terraces along this part of Waters Road. The arrangement of neighbouring blocks to the west around the curve of Waters Road means that the appeal site narrows towards the rear. The front of the appeal property sits forward of the building line of the blocks to the west, which gives it some prominence in the street scene as much of the side elevation is clearly visible from the west. Front gardens are shallow and the dwellings close to the public street, but the gaps between blocks allow glimpses of greenery in rear gardens which are generally more spacious.
4. The proposed development would add a two-storey extension to the side of the host building, with a gap of approximately 1m to the boundary with 166 Waters Road. The upper floor would be set back around 0.7m from the existing front elevation. At the back of the house it would extend around 3.5m beyond the existing rear elevation. It would wrap around the full width of the existing house on the ground floor, and a little over half its width at first floor level.

5. Policy 15 of the 2011 Lewisham Core Strategy (the CS) requires development to be of the highest design quality, to be sensitive to local context and responsive to local character. DM Policy 30 of the 2014 Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (the DMLP) requires development to address identified design and environmental issues relating to the typology of their local area. For the 'suburban terraces' typology of the appeal site this includes maintaining the scale of development and the spaces between the short terraces.
6. DM Policy 31 of the DMLP requires extensions to respect and complement the form and setting of the original building, and indicates that they will not be permitted where they would adversely affect the architectural integrity of a group of buildings, or where they would be incongruous in terms of the important features of a character area. The 2019 Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD) notes that side gaps can contribute to the sense of spaciousness in suburban areas, and accordingly advises that side extensions should be set in at least 1m from boundaries and the host building's front façade.
7. The proposed development would represent a substantial expansion of the host dwelling. The first floor set back from the existing front elevation would be smaller than advised in the SPD. Although it would allow the roof to be set below the main ridge, combined with the lack of set back at ground floor level it would be insufficient to prevent the extension appearing bulky and dominating the host building when viewed from the street. The size of the extension and its relatively complex roof would be incongruous in the context of both the modest scale of the original house and the regular simplicity of the terraces in the area. While the rear parts of the proposed development would not be visible from public vantage points, the loss of the terrace's symmetry would be readily apparent from the street because of the way the host dwelling sits forward of the building line of the neighbouring block.
8. The extension's separation from the side boundary with No 166 would comply with the SPD guidance in that respect, and the windows and the front door on that elevation would break up an otherwise large and unrelenting wall. Nonetheless, the considerable depth of the extension would diminish the gap between the two properties and reduce the contribution it makes to the spacious character of the area.
9. The appellant has referred to other dwellings on Waters Road where single storey extensions sit flush with the front elevation. I do not know the precise circumstances in which these other schemes have come into being. However, from the evidence before me the proposed extension in this case is of a considerably larger size and scale than other examples nearby, and would consequently have a greater effect on the character and appearance of the host building and on the street scene. This is an argument to which I therefore give little weight.
10. The appellant has also drawn my attention to a previous appeal decision relating to the same property¹. The Inspector noted then that although the proposed development would narrow the gap between Nos 168 and 166, it would not have any significant visual effect on the qualities of the area. From the information before me, the two-storey side extension proposed in that case was not as deep as the current proposal. It would therefore have had a lesser

¹ APP/C5690/D/17/3192827

impact on the gap between the two properties and its contribution to the area's spacious character. I have had regard to that 2018 decision, and my findings are consistent with those of my predecessor, although the larger scale of the proposal in this case has led me to a different view in respect of its effect on the gap between the neighbouring blocks. Even if it had not, a lack of significant harm to the gap would not have outweighed the harm caused to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its terrace by the form and scale of the proposed extension.

11. I therefore conclude that the proposal, because of its scale, bulk and incongruous design, and its detrimental effect on the symmetry of the terraced block within which it would sit, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building. It would not be sensitive to local context, and would harmfully diminish the spacious character of this part of the Waters Road street scene. Consequently, it would conflict with CS Policy 15, and DMLP Policies 30 and 31, and would not conform with the guidance in the SPD as a whole.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector