



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 September 2019

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/19/3230729 70 Purneys Road, London SE9 6HT

- 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 and Mrs Gallop against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/0567/HD, dated 15 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a part two storey/part single storey, side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a part two storey/part single storey, side/rear extension at 70 Purneys Road, London SE9 6HT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 19/0567/HD, dated 15 February 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 plan: TGA.0293 01 revision C.
 - 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 appellant submitted a revised drawing with the appeal submission that shows a canopy extending from above a ground floor bay window on the proposed side extension over the front door of the original house. Whilst this is a relatively minor change to the proposal, it was not part of the proposal that was considered by the Council and on which it made its decision. As the Council and any interested third parties have not had the opportunity to comment on this proposed amendment as part of the appeal process, it would potentially prejudice their interests if I were to accept this amendment. I have, therefore, determined the appeal based on the drawing originally submitted to the Council.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal building is a two-storey, end of terrace, dwelling. It forms part of a terrace of four houses that have render finished walls, a hipped roof form, and bay windows at ground floor level on the two central properties. Purneys Road and the streets leading off it are comprised of short terraces and semi-detached houses that share similar architectural features to the terraced houses, such as hipped roofs and ground floor bay windows. The appeal building is the last house on this side of Purneys Road. Beyond this, a grass verge runs to the end of the street where a pair of semi-detached houses are situated at an angle to the junction. At the west end of Purneys Road, the houses on Birdbrook Road, Ridgebrook Road, and beyond are also terraced and semi-detached in form although of a different design and materials.
5. When read together, Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016, and Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 (the Core Strategy) seek to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design that has regard to, and complements, the architecture and built form of the surrounding area. Core Strategy Policy DH(a) expects extensions to dwelling houses to be limited to a scale and design appropriate to the building and locality. Further design advice on side and rear extensions is set out in the Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2016 (the SPD) which is to be read alongside the more general design policies in the development plan.
6. The SPD requires extensions to generally be subservient to the original dwelling house. The original house has a frontage width of 5.9 metres. The extension to the side of the property would be 2.8 metres wide, which is less than half of the width of the original frontage. At first floor level the extension would be set back from the main front elevation and would not project beyond the existing rear wall. The ridge of the new hipped roof to the extension would be set below the level of the main roof ridge and the new roof would maintain the same pitch to the roof planes as the main roof. This generally complies with the guidance in the SPD.
7. At ground floor level the proposed bay window to the extension would project slightly beyond the main front wall of the original house. This would be covered by a small sloping roof linking to the set back first floor of the extension. In respect of side extensions, the SPD states that an extension should normally be set back slightly from the front wall of the house to allow the original house to remain prominent. The appellant has drawn my attention to a recently approved extension at number 42 Purneys Road and I was able to see this when I visited the site as this was largely complete at the time. This has a very similar form to the appeal proposal in that at ground floor level it is flush with the main elevation of the house, although it does not have a bay window. This scheme also includes a front porch projecting beyond the front of the house which is larger than the proposed bay window at the appeal building. Whilst I do not know the circumstances that lead to this scheme being accepted, I nonetheless saw that this extension did not unduly reduce the prominence of the original house despite not fully complying with the guidance in the SPD. In this context, I do not find that the appeal proposal would reduce the prominence of the main house at number 70.

8. The ground floor rear elements of the proposed extension would project 3.6 metres beyond the original rear wall of the house and extend across the full width of the original house and the side extension. This also complies with the guidance in the SPD. The Council consider that the height at which the proposed roof joins the main house would lead to the rear extension not appearing subordinate. The SPD only requires that pitched roofs to rear extensions be at a shallow pitch to avoid blocking daylight and sunlight. It does not define what is a shallow pitch or set any height restrictions. The Council officer's report accepts that, due to the orientation of the sites, the boundary fence, and restricted depth of the rear extension, any reduction in daylight or sunlight to 68 Purneys Road would not be unacceptable. It is also common ground that the extension would not result in a sense of enclosure or a loss of privacy. The SPD is guidance only and is not prescriptive. Whilst the proposal does not wholly conform to the guidance in the SPD, in the areas where it does not, it would not conflict with the stated objectives of the SPD to maintain the prominence of the original house and prevent overshadowing or loss of light. In this respect I do not find any conflict with the requirements of the SPD.
9. I have had regard to the Council's point regarding the roof over the bay window. Although the bay windows on other properties in the street have a hipped roof, I observed that on several houses this hipped roof has been removed leaving a flat top to the window. I also saw that a substantial number of properties have had porches constructed outside the front door, generally with a monopitch roof. These various alterations elsewhere in the street have diluted the symmetry of the terraces and introduced a greater variety of detailing on the buildings. Within this context the proposed small sloped roof over the bay window of the extension would not be harmful to the street scene.
10. I accept that the footprint of the proposed extension would be greater in area than the existing ground floor area of the appeal building. However, there is no policy restriction on the area of extensions to dwellings in either the Core Strategy, the London Plan or the SPD. The requirement is that any proposed extension appear subordinate to the original house. Taken both individually and collectively, the side and rear elements of the proposed extension do not equal or exceed the height of the original house and the form of the original house would still be discernible following the extensions. Due to its location, the side elevation of the appeal building is very visible and, consequently, the proposed side extension would also be readily visible. Nevertheless, the large gap between the appeal building and the houses of a different design on the junction with Ridgebrook Road would result in the proposed extension not being seen immediately adjacent to a similar property. Although the proposed extension would alter the appearance of the terrace, as a result of the set back first floor and lower ridge height, and the distance to the next property, the visual effect would be reduced. When seen alongside the other houses in the block, whilst it would alter the appearance of the terrace, the proposed extension would not be perceived as unduly large and would not be harmful to the overall street scene.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would comply with the relevant requirements of Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan and Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the Core Strategy and the SPD.

Conditions

12. I have had regard to the conditions that have been suggested by the parties. In order to provide certainty regarding what has been granted permission, I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings. In order to ensure that the proposed extension is in keeping with the original building and the surrounding area it is also necessary to impose a condition requiring that the external materials used in the extension match those of the existing house.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR