



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2019 by C Brennan BAE (Hons) M.PLAN

Decision by Andrew Owen BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/19/3235047

74 Pepys Road, London SE14 5SD

- 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 Louisa Plant against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/19/111158, dated 25 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2019.
 - The proposed development is the installation of one Velux roof light to the front, two Velux roof lights to the side of the property and one Velux roof light to the rear of the property in connection with alteration to the existing roof space to provide additional living accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area.

Procedural Matters

4. During my site visit, I observed that a front rooflight had already been installed within the front roofslope. Although it is broadly similar to the proposal as shown on the submitted drawings, it differs slightly to the that on the plans in terms of its positioning and possibly its size.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached, two-storey Victorian property with lower ground floor level. The site is situated on the western side of Pepys Road near the junction with Ommaney Road and lies within the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area, whose significance is largely derived from its suburban character and the uniform and cohesive architecture of its Victorian dwellinghouses. Like most properties along Pepys Road, the appeal property is designated as a "positive building" within the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2008), which also states that the installation of obtrusive
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rooflights within front roof slopes causes harm to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

6. During my site visit, I observed that there were examples of rooflights within the front roof slopes of several properties to the south of the appeal site. However, these rooflights are generally smaller in size than the proposal and have been installed in a portrait-style orientation within their roofslopes. However, the proposed front rooflight would be larger, and have a landscape-style orientation making it wider than these other examples. As a result, it is considered that the proposal would appear as an incongruous addition to the host building in the context of the street scene. Although the proposed front rooflight would not be visible from the near pavement, it would be particularly prominent from the opposite side of the road and from views to the east from Ommaney Road.
7. Furthermore, as the proportions of the proposed rooflight would not align with the door and window openings of the front elevation below, it is considered that the proposal would relate poorly to the proportions of the host building. Also, as there are no rooflights at the adjoining semi-detached property at No 76, the proposed rooflight would undermine the symmetry between the appeal property and No. 76 and would thereby detract from the character and appearance of the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area.
8. In the Heritage Statement, the appellant states that the visual impact of the proposed front rooflight would be minimised as it would be flush with the roofslope. However, even so, due to its size and positioning, it is considered that the proposed roofslope would appear as an incongruous addition to the appeal property and the Conservation Area.
9. The appellant suggests that the guidance for rooflight design included within the Council's Alterations and Extensions SPD (2019) is based on houses with pitched roofs. While graphics within the document illustrate acceptable and unacceptable examples of rooflights on pitched-roof houses, it is not stated that those graphics relate explicitly to pitched-roof houses only. Furthermore, the proposal would clearly conflict with paragraph 5.5.4 of the SPD, which states that rooflights exceeding 600mm in width are detrimental to the appearance of a roof.
10. The appellant states that the proposed rooflight could not be positioned within the middle third of the roof slope as per the Alterations and Extensions SPD and align with the openings of the front elevation. However, I am not persuaded that it would not be possible to provide to provide a front-facing window that would accord with both these guidelines. Regardless, the proposal would be unacceptable on account of both its incongruous landscape orientation across the roofslope and its overly large size.
11. As such, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the site and the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area. The proposal therefore conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), which states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. The proposal also conflicts with Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016), which broadly require that development should have regard to the form of an area, make a positive contribution to a coherent streetscape and conserve the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The proposal would also

conflict with Policies 15 and 16 of the Core Strategy (2011), which respectively state that development should be sensitive to local context and the value of heritage assets. The proposal also conflicts with Policies DM30, DM31 and DM36 of the Development Management Local Plan (2014), which state that development should attain a high standard of design, be in keeping with the original pattern of the host building and preserve the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Policy DM37 relates to non-designated heritage assets, so is not relevant to this case and as such there is no conflict with that policy.

12. The harm that the proposed development would cause to the significance of the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area would be less than substantial. However, there would be no public benefits that would outweigh that harm.

Other Matters

13. It is acknowledged that a smaller rooflight would result in relatively less natural light to the loft space. However, it is not considered that this justifies the proposal based on amount of harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area.
14. The appellant states that there are many examples of properties along Pepys Road where a front rooflight does not align with the window and door opening below. The appellant also states that these rooflights had been installed since the creation of the Conservation Area and that they do not comply with the criteria set out within the SPD. However, as many of these front rooflights were most likely installed prior to the adoption of the SPD, they were assessed under a different policy framework and so cannot be considered to set a comparable precedent for the proposed development. Nonetheless, each appeal must be considered on its own merit, and in this case it is considered that the proposed front rooflight would relate particularly poorly to both the proportions of the appeal property and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
15. I note the appellant's comments regarding communication with the Council during the course of the application. Regardless, these considerations are not relevant to the planning merits of the proposal.
16. The Council raise no objection to the rear and side rooflights, and I have no reason to disagree.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Brennan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR