



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2019

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc DipTP (Cert Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/19/3238735

19 Manor Lane, London SE13 5QW

- 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 Ms Hannah Al-Rifai against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/19/112396, dated 23 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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This decision is issued in accordance with Section 56(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and supersedes the decision issued on 7 January 2020.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The site visit took place mid afternoon on an overcast winter's day. Despite this, I was able to look at the appeal site and surrounding Conservation Area in adequate light to carry out a full site assessment.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or the appearance of the Lee Manor Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a two storey mid-terrace Victorian property with a sloping pitched roof on Manor Lane. On the frontage, it had a two storey bay with a small gable above which joins up with the main pitched roof. To the rear, there is a two storey outrigger with mono-pitched roof that joins up with a neighbours to form a symmetrical gable ended projection. On the appeal property, there is a single storey extension between the side of the outrigger and the common boundary with the neighbouring dwelling at 17 Manor Lane. It has traditional style fenestration, decorative mouldings, window headers and a recessed front porch.
5. The appeal site and terraced dwellings are within the Lee Manor Conservation Area which comprises a planned suburb of the 19th and 20th Century. Despite variations in style, there is generally a consistent use of materials and

architectural treatment within terraces along Manor Lane and other terraced streets within the Conservation Area. On Manor Lane, a common feature is asymmetric frontages comprising a front door and first floor window on one side and two storey projecting gable on the other, as on the appeal property. To the rear, there are rear unaltered sections of terraces where dwellings are simpler in design with rear outriggers and uncluttered roofscapes.

6. Although areas are sub-divided into character areas, such defining features are identified within the Lee Manor Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) 2008 and generally extend to other parts of the Conservation Area. As a result, the Conservation Area has historical, aesthetic and architectural qualities, which are of significance and value, and are of special interest to the Conservation Area as a whole.
7. The Council's Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2019 states that in Conservation Areas, rear roof extensions will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate exceptional design quality and high quality materials. The SPD also states its location should be set in significantly from the eaves, ridge and sides, and where the dormer is no wider than two thirds of the original roof.
8. The appeal property has retained much of its original historic, aesthetic and architectural qualities but there are nearby properties with rear roof extensions, many of which dominate their host property's roof. The Appellant has provided six examples of these from 15 to 41 Manor Lane on this side of the road which would not comply with the guidance of the SPD. On one side of the appeal property, three properties have significant sized roof extensions whilst on the other side one property down, there is another large roof extension. On this basis, there is a varied character and appearance within this rear part of the Manor Lane, with roofscapes not adding to defining qualities of the Conservation Area.
9. Given this, the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling provides a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed roof extension would continue an existing pattern of roof extensions in this part of the Conservation Area. However, it would contain a large picture window which would be approximately 2.35m high by 2m deep and a 2m section wide section of flat-roof in front. The window's size would be totally out of proportion with the original openings of the existing and adjacent dwellings and thus would not represent high quality, site specific and sensitive design. Indeed, it would visually add considerable bulk and scale to the extension and dwelling by reason of its noticeable expanse, including its height.
10. In comparison with other nearby roof extensions, the roof extension would give an impression of being far bigger and more dominant. Although not complying with the SPD, the neighbouring dwelling at 25 Manor Lane takes the form of dormers within a roof extension which respects the original roofscape in a better way by reason of better window proportions. The proposed extension's picture window would not be dissimilar in size to the existing French windows at ground floor but these are in far less prominent position. For all these reasons, the roof extension would not be sympathetic in form, scale, materials and architectural detail to the host property and surrounding area.
11. There are limited public views of the proposed extension. However, the lack of public visibility is not an overriding consideration as a Conservation Areas is an

irreplaceable resource. Policy requires that they should be enjoyed in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. The extension would be a permanent feature seen by the occupiers of neighbouring properties as well as future occupiers of the appeal property. In this case, the design of the roof extension would result in a particularly unsympathetic development. Taking into account all these considerations, the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

12. At 26 and 64 Manor Lane, Inspectors have allowed rear roof extensions but these did not have a large picture window. Additionally at No 26, the proposed dormer was set back from the roof eaves unlike the window of the proposed roof extension. Therefore, there are differences between the appeal proposal and these examples of roof extensions, along with others permitted along Manor Lane, highlighted in the appellant's appeal statement. The Council's Conservation Officer has drawn my attention to a dismissed appeal at 74 Manor Lane but the Inspector noted that the appeal site was located in a street section where there was only one modestly sized rear dormer extension. To my mind, these examples illustrate every proposal has to be considered on its own particular merits taking into account design, context and policy.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
14. In accordance with the Framework, the type of harm identified above would be less than substantial. It is necessary that this identified harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this regard, the proposal would upgrade existing accommodation to accommodate modern family needs for existing and future generations. However, the benefits would be diminished by reason of the proposal being small-scale relating to an existing single dwelling. They also have to be weighed against the adverse impact on the significance of the Conservation Area for which considerable importance and weight is required to be attached. Thus, the harm to the significance of the Conservation Area would outweigh the scheme's benefits.
15. Additionally, there are frontage rooflights and a new rear crittall style bifold doors in place of the French Windows. The rooflights would be conservation style with a vertical bar. A planning condition would ensure that the rooflights and bifold doors would be in keeping with the style of the dwelling. On this basis, these features would not harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
16. Nevertheless, the roof extension development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the area for all these reasons indicated. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to the policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011), policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011 and policies 30, 31 and 36 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan 2014.

Conclusion

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

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR