



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 January 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/19/3238636

6 Thirlmere Road, London, SW16 1QW

- 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 Downing against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/02752/FUL, dated 27 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is 'demolition of existing garage and replacement with single storey side extension'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and area, and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Streatham Park and Garrads Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The site is an extended three-storey detached house on a residential street in the Streatham Park and Garrads Road Conservation Area. The house is constructed of stock brick with red brick dressings and intricate window detailing, and is a particularly fine example of the characteristic architecture of the area. The frontage of the house is fundamentally symmetrical by design, although small variances can be observed. Many of the properties on the street have either original or modern one- or two-storey subservient structures along the side return, and gaps between the houses are generally narrow. The area proposed for development is currently occupied by a small garage with a sloping roof set approximately 4 m back from the front of the house.
4. Policy Q11 of the Lambeth Local Plan (adopted September 2015) requires that side extensions are set back from the corners of the host building to ensure they remain subordinate. It is proposed to set back the front of the extension 2 m from the front of the house and 100 mm from the rear, which is consistent with the guidelines in Lambeth's Supplementary Planning Document, 2015 (SPD). However, these set-backs require further justification in light of Policy Q22 and Policy 7.8 of the London Plan (March 2016), which emphasise preservation of building lines and form in Conservation Areas. Building a materially higher structure further forward than the current garage would make

it far more visually prominent and as a result it would unacceptably imbalance the essentially symmetrical composition of the existing building when viewed from the public domain. It would therefore harm the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with policies of the Local Plan.

5. The SPD recommends that wraparounds are not built on heritage assets. Although not explicitly stated why this is the case, it is typically to protect against domination of the host house and harm to amenity. In this case the harm from having a wraparound extension is partly mitigated because it would not be evident from public space, the side extension would be narrow and there is little uniformity in surrounding properties. However, the current proposals would clearly appear as a wraparound when viewed from the rear, exacerbated by the lack of significant set-back. Overall, on this aspect I therefore find conflict with the SPD and Policy Q22.
6. The statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and this is a matter of considerable weight. For the reasons set out above the proposal would have a negative effect on the significance of a designated heritage asset. I do not consider the overall harm to the Conservation Area to be 'substantial' and I have therefore applied the test in paragraph 196 of the Framework. The construction would generate a small short-term contribution to the economy and the result would be to remove an old garage, replacing it with a modern alternative. However, I do not consider that these minor public benefits would outweigh the scale of harm identified above.
7. Policy Q5 of the Local Plan and 7.4 of the London Plan require development to respond positively to characteristic local patterns of block and grain. The original space between the host building and the property boundary has already been filled with a garage and in my opinion the principle of infill at this location has already been established. Space would be retained above the ground floor level to maintain the gap between the buildings, in line with Policy Q11 of the Local Plan. Although there would be a minor change to the bulk of the building block, given the prevailing pattern of subservient side structures and tight grain observed in the area, I do not consider this to be out of character and therefore not in conflict with local policies.
8. Policies Q5 and Q11 of the Local Plan require that account should be taken of the overall bulk and massing of proposals to ensure subordination. The increase in floor space from the combined extensions would be approximately 50% larger than the original, which is a substantial increase overall. However, the footprint of the side extension would be a subservient proportion of the enlargement and in my opinion would not increase domination of the host building to a harmful extent. These matters do not, however, override the harm outlined above.

Other Matters

9. The appellant has drawn to my attention a letter of support from the public and a lack of objection from local societies. I give some weight to this, but it is not sufficient to overcome the harm identified above.
10. I observed during the site visit that the house next door (No 8) has a longer extension to the rear. However, whilst I do not have the details of the case

before me, I note that the neighbouring house is of a different structure and in any event, I must judge this case on its own merits.

Conclusions

11. For these reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR