



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/19/3237623

27 Lizban Street, Blackheath, London SE3 8SS

- 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 Miss Helen Roberts against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/1451/HD, dated 17 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as: Removal of existing window and brickwork below and replace with timber French doors. Remove existing rear exit door. Brick up at low level and fit new timber sliding sash window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the removal of existing window and brickwork below and replace with timber French doors; remove existing rear exit door; brick up at low level and fit new timber sliding sash window at 27 Lizban Street, Blackheath, London SE3 8SS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 19/1451/HD, dated 17 April 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 plans: Location Plan; Drawing 001 (Existing Elevations); Drawing 002 Revision A (Proposed Elevations); and Window and Door Specification.
 - 3) The replacement window and French door hereby approved shall be fabricated from timber and painted to match those of the existing house, and the new brickwork shall match that of the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal building and the Rectory Field Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a two storey, mid-Nineteenth Century, terraced house with an elevated principal floor and a semi-basement level. It forms part of a terrace of similar houses running from number 13 to number 36 Lizban Street.

The western end of the terrace consists of mid to late Twentieth Century, two storey, terraced houses adjacent to older, three storey, properties at numbers 8 to 12. The buildings at numbers 13 to 36 Lizban Street are locally listed and the street as a whole is within the Rectory Field Conservation Area. These properties are also covered by an Article 4 Direction that prevents the replacement of windows and doors without planning permission first being obtained.

4. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in making decisions on planning applications and appeals within a Conservation Area, special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area. In addition, Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires 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.
5. The appeal proposal seeks to remove an existing rear, ground floor, window and to replace it with a timber French door, and also to remove the existing rear door to the property, replacing this with a new timber sash window. The proposal would involve removing brickwork below the existing window opening to accommodate the French door and building up new brickwork below the proposed new window to partially block the existing door opening. The width of the existing door and window openings would not be altered.
6. The Council officer's report sets out that the Council do not object to the replacement of the existing door with a 2 over 2 pane, timber, sliding sash window. The council's objection is limited to the loss of the existing window.
7. Neither party has submitted substantive evidence in respect of the significance of the conservation area or the significance of the locally listed buildings as non-designated heritage assets. I have been provided with a copy of the Rectory Field Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2010 (the CACA); the Rectory Field Conservation Area Management Strategy 2010 (the CAMS) and the Guidance Note, which was produced in 1996, relating to the Article 4 Direction that is in place for parts of the conservation area (the Guidance Note). Whilst the Council state that the proposed works would erode the character and appearance of the appeal building and result in a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area, it has not elaborated on how the proposed works would do so, or what aspects of the significance of the conservation area and the non-designated heritage asset would be harmed.
8. From the submitted documents and from what I observed when I visited the site, the significance of the conservation area, insofar as it relates to this proposal, is as an example of early Victorian architecture and that it reflects the urbanisation of this part of the Borough, in particular the successive development of individual fields within a landholding during that time period. The architecture of the buildings is illustrative of the transition from Georgian to Victorian taste and style, and the architectural composition of the buildings, in particular, its uniformity, simplicity, attention to proportion, use of arched doorways, and designed fenestration pattern, creates attractive streetscapes. There is less information relating specifically to the locally listed buildings, however, from what I saw during my site visit, their significance is similar to the significance of the conservation area as set out above insofar as it relates to this appeal.

9. Whilst the proposed development would alter the appearance of the rear elevation of the building, change does not necessarily correlate to harm. Within the terrace at numbers 13 to 36 Lizban Street, there is an obvious designed approach to the elevations with paired main entrances and the symmetrical arrangement of window openings on adjoining pairs of houses. This clear pattern of window openings is also translated to the rear elevations of the houses. The CACA, CAMS and Guidance Note do not make any particular reference to the rear of buildings, other than to identify that there have been some unsympathetic rear extensions and a number of uPVC or aluminium replacement windows. The CACA also notes that the visual effect of alteration to the rear of properties in the area is often mitigated by not being visible except from the back windows of other houses or neighbouring gardens.
10. The appeal proposal would not alter the width or disposition of the openings on the rear elevation of the house, however, the vertical dimensions would be changed. Although there is a regular pattern of window openings on the rear elevation of the terrace, I saw that there were a diverse range of window styles present in terms of the glazing pattern and number of panes per sash, including on the appeal building itself which has both 2 over 2 and 3 over 3 pane windows on the rear elevation. As a result of this and the presence of several rear extensions, the rear of the terrace is much less uniform than the street facing elevations. From the evidence, and my observations during the site visit, there are other examples of French doors or similar patio doors on several other properties in the terrace.
11. The appeal proposal would not obscure or result in the loss of any of the architectural details listed as being locally distinctive in the CACA, although I accept that the current timber sash window would be lost. The CACA sets out that pre-1914 timber windows are worthy of preservation or retention. Whilst the existing rear ground floor window is evidently of some age, there is no definitive evidence before me that demonstrates that this window dates from before 1914.
12. The proposed new French doors and new sash window would be fabricated in timber, which is the preferred approach set out in the CACA, CAMS and the Guidance Note. The proposed new window would be a 2 over 2 pane design which would be consistent with the existing ground floor window. The new French doors would have 8 panes in total, but this would not be wholly inconsistent with windows in the area, many of which are of a multipane design, and there is not a consistent approach to the form of the windows on the rear elevation of the house at present.
13. The proposed works relate to the semi-basement area and are at the rear of the property. They would not be visible from the public domain and I saw that they would only be visible from the rear windows of a small number of properties in Lyveden Road to the north. I also noted that the rear garden of the appeal property rises away from the house, which would slightly reduce the visibility of the basement area from nearby properties.
14. The appeal proposals would not disrupt the uniformity of the front elevation of the terrace, which makes an important contribution to the street scene, nor would the alterations undermine the ability to understand or interpret the historic functions of the various elements of the house. Within this context, the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the

appeal building and the conservation area would be a neutral one. The proposed alterations would not have an adverse effect on the significance of either the conservation area or the non-designated heritage asset insofar as I have identified these for the purposes of the appeal.

15. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the appeal building and the Rectory Field Conservation Area. It would comply with the relevant requirements of Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, Policies HD1, DH3, DH(h) and DH(j) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 and the guidance in the Rectory Field CACA and CAMP which, when read together, expect new development to be of a high standard of design that has regard to its context and the historic environment, and which would preserve or enhance the character, appearance and significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Conditions

16. I have had regard to the list of conditions suggested by the Council. In order to provide certainty in respect of what has been granted planning permission, I have attached a condition specifying the proposed drawings. In order to ensure that the proposed new works maintain the existing appearance of the building it is necessary to impose a condition requiring that the replacement window and door and new brickwork match those on the house. I have slightly altered the wording suggested by the Council in order to make the condition more precise and relevant to the development proposed.

Conclusion

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

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR