
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 August 2020

by P W Clark MA(Oxon) MA(TRP) MRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/20/3247521

Flat 1, 42 Streatham Common North, London SW16 3HS

- 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 Dianne Aitken against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/03555/FUL, dated 7 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey ground floor rear extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey ground floor rear extension at Flat 1, 42 Streatham Common North, London SW16 3HS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/03555/FUL, dated 7 November 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 10_CD; Block Plan 11_CD; Site Plan as Proposed 21_CD; Ground Floor Plan as Proposed 22_CD; Roof Plan as Proposed 24_DD; Elevation Looking West and Section AA as Proposed 25_CD; Elevation Looking West as Proposed 26_DD; Section AA as Proposed 27_DD; North Elevation as Proposed 28_DD.

Procedural matter

2. The application form is dated 7 November 2019 in the declaration at section 26 but the Council's acknowledgement of the application which is dated 18 October 2019 records that the date the application was received was 26 September 2019 and that it was validated on 7 October 2019.

Reasons

3. The sole main issue in this appeal is its effect on the character and appearance of the area which in part is included within the Streatham Common Conservation Area. The site is located at the junction of Streatham Common North with Hill House Road. The boundary of the Conservation Area runs along the rear boundaries of properties fronting Streatham Common North. The

- wider area within which the proposal would be experienced includes the remainder of Hill House Road beyond the Conservation Area boundary.
4. The character of the Streatham Common Conservation Area is well analysed in the Council's Appraisal dated April 2017. I can do no better than to adopt extracts from it. It is "characterised by an eclectic mix of historic housing lining the perimeter of an historic open space". "It illustrates the piecemeal suburban development of Streatham as London expanded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries". The property's relatively recent conversion to flats has continued this piecemeal suburban development. The extension proposed would be no more significant than a further chapter in that piecemeal suburban development.
 5. In relation to the section of Streatham Common North of which the appeal site forms a part, the Appraisal notes that the frontage comprises "lower and more closely grouped interwar houses. Architecturally, the street is an essay in variety; many houses are of good quality and retain attractive original features despite harm caused by replacement modern doors and windows. The low-rise form and unaltered silhouettes of these properties are a key element in their positive contribution to the setting of the Common". As it would be a single storey element situated to the rear of the appeal property, the proposal would have no effect on the low-rise form and unaltered silhouette of the appeal site.
 6. The Appraisal continues; "The semi-rural character of the Common is supplemented by the rear gardens which collectively are of amenity and habitat value and provide a soft landscaped setting to the buildings. They contribute positively to the spatial character of the area." The scheme would project approximately 2m into a garden 25m deep and so would have negligible impact on its amenity, habitat value or provision of a soft landscaped setting.
 7. I conclude that the proposal would have no practical effect on, and so would preserve, the character or appearance of the Streatham Common Conservation Area. It would therefore comply with policy Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan September 2015 which requires development to respect the positive characteristics of a conservation area.
 8. In terms of character and appearance more widely defined, the appeal property sits at the end of a row of similar (but not identical) inter-war semi-detached houses. They have a common L-shaped plan form in which the substantial main body of the house is supplemented by a rear projecting service wing. In contrast to late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century precedents, the service wings of these houses, although two storeys in height, have a shallow projection. Moreover, part of the space within the well of the L is enclosed within the ground floor accommodation with the consequence that, at ground floor level the service wing only projects about 3m or so. Consequently, a simple infill of the space within the well of the L results in a diminutive extension in relation to the substantial depth (12m or so) of the main body of the original house.
 9. Lambeth Local Plan policy Q11 (e) envisages extensions which would infill the well, those which would extend the service wing and also, on non-heritage assets, those which would do both by wrapping around the corner of the well and the service wing. But sub-clause (iii) requires that corner to remain exposed on heritage (as opposed to non-heritage) assets, effectively requiring two separate extensions, with the infill of the well limited to less than the

service wing in extent. No explanation for this distinction of acceptability between heritage and non-heritage assets is given in the reasoning of the plan itself but the Council's Building Alterations and Extensions SPG explains that it is so as better to emphasise the subordination of extensions which policy Q11(b) states to be key to their acceptability.

10. In the present case, the well of the L has been filled with a conservatory. It is intended to replace this with a flat-roofed extension which would project 2m beyond the end of the service wing and also extend across the rear of the service wing itself. It would not comply with policy or with the Council's Guidance because it would not leave the specified corner exposed other than at first floor level. But, to do so would limit any infill extension to a depth less than that of the existing conservatory.
11. The property itself is not a designated heritage asset; it is part of a Conservation Area which is a designated asset but the character of which does not depend on the retained exposure of the corner in question. The appeal property may be regarded as a non-designated asset. But the corner in question has already been compromised by the existing conservatory, so pragmatically, the only point now to consider is whether the extension would comply with what the plan calls the key consideration, namely, whether it would be subordinate or not.
12. The facts speak for themselves. The existing building is substantial; about 9m wide, 15m deep on its flank facing Hill House Road, two stories high with a substantial hipped roof with dormers containing a second floor. The extension would be about 9m wide but only 2m deeper than the existing conservatory and only a single storey high with no pitched roof. It would clearly be subordinate.
13. Hill House Road to the side of the property falls away down the hillside. The appeal site is elevated behind a retaining wall, on top of which is a fence not much less than 2m high, above which rises a dense hedgerow. From the street below the site it is unlikely that more than a corner of the eaves of the proposed extension would be visible. The existing service wing and its hipped roof would rise well above it, continuing to dominate the scene.
14. The Council's Building Alterations and Extensions SPG advises that the prevailing characteristics of the adjoining properties, especially the rear building line and size of the rear garden are likely to be a material consideration when considering the extent of the rearward projection. The minimal extent of the rearward projection in relation to the garden has already been noted. The only additional point to note is that the extension would project no further than the existing extension at number 44 or the existing conservatory at number 43.
15. I therefore conclude that, notwithstanding the technical breach of Local Plan policy Q11(e(iii)), the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character of the building itself and on the street scene. It would comply with policy Q11(b) which states that the subordination of extensions is key to their acceptability.
16. No conditions are suggested. The materials to be used (painted render) are specified on the drawings and so no conditions are required other than the time

limit required by law and the condition requiring compliance with the plans which allows the legal provision for minor variations to be applied.

P. W. Clark

Inspector