
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: 27 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/20/3249596

45 Strathbrook Road, London SW16 3AT

- 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 & Mrs D Howe against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/04593/FUL, dated 10 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear dormer and front roof windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The sole main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Streatham Lodge Estate Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is characterised by middle class suburban housing dating from the 1900s to the 1930s which exhibits architectural richness, albeit more concentrated in houses from the earliest period of development, and a consistent character. An Article 4 Direction has been applied to control permitted development rights including the installation of rooflights and dormer extensions which were considered to have led to an erosion of the original character of the properties.
3. Number 45 Strathbrook Road forms part of a terrace not dating from the earliest period of the area's development so its architectural features are simplified but present nonetheless. The terrace consists of originally six houses arranged symmetrically. The inner pair are recessed from the two outer pairs which have feature gables over the principal windows. At ground floor level, these take the form of canted bays. At first floor level a multi-part casement has the central parts projecting, originally supported on a wooden corbel. The ground floor entrances are framed by an orange brick arch with ornamental keystone supported on piers with rustications formed by layered tiles.
4. The original symmetry of the terrace has been modified in several ways. Windows have been replaced and porches added with complementary, rather than matching designs. More noticeably, the hipped roof of number 37 has been altered to a gable end and two rooflights have been inserted, one centred on its gable feature and the principal windows below but the other having no

- relationship to any other feature of the façade. At the other end of the terrace, an additional house has been constructed, in a convincingly matching style but, by its simple existence, necessarily unbalancing the symmetry of the terrace.
5. At the rear, these last two changes are expressed at number 37 by a large box dormer eclipsing the original roof in a manner not now favoured by (and reportedly constructed prior to the adoption of) current development plan policy and at numbers 47 and 47A by three individual dormers constructed in accordance with current development plan policy.
 6. Paragraphs 4.14 and 4.16 of the Council's Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document of September 2015 advises that rooflights should not be placed on the front roof slopes of heritage assets nor on roofs with gables, hips or turrets. Although forming part of a Conservation Area which is a designated heritage asset the appeal site is not a designated heritage asset in its own right, so the advice in paragraph 4.14 may not strictly apply but the front roof slope of the appeal property has both a hip ridge and a gable feature, so the advice of paragraph 4.16 is applicable. Nevertheless, the Council's officer report accepts that a single conservation type rooflight aligning with the first floor windows over the entrance would be acceptable.
 7. Of the three rooflights proposed to be inserted into the front of the current appeal property, the two smaller ones on the recessed roof slope would be placed symmetrically either side of an axis centred on the entrance arch and first floor window and so would comply with Lambeth Local Plan policy Q11(l) which requires rooflights to be modest, small in size and aligned sensitively in relation to windows on the elevation below. By contrast, the third, larger rooflight on the forward slope would be placed with little or no relationship with any other architectural feature on the building.
 8. At the rear, a large rectangular roof extension is proposed. It would rise in line with the rear façade to a height almost level with the existing ridgeline. There would be only vestigial elements of the original roof remaining. In effect, the appearance of the rear of the property would change from a two storey house with a pitched roof to a three storey house with a flat one. The extension would contain one small casement and a large multi-casement window, neither having any size or disposition relating to the window openings on floors below. It would clearly contravene Lambeth Local Plan policy Q11(k(ii) and (v)) which requires dormers to be subordinate so that the original roof remains dominant and requires windows on heritage assets to align with windows on the elevation below.
 9. Planning law requires me to determine the appeal in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Dismissal of this appeal may seem harsh in the light of the somewhat similar extension which exists at number 37 which is a material consideration but I agree with the Council that the proposal would do further harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The consistent facts of the more recent adoption of the Local Plan, the adoption of the Article 4 Direction, the preparation of a well-judged supplementary planning document and the example set by the dormer windows at number 47 compel me to dismiss the appeal.

P. W. Clark Inspector