

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2020

by David Fitzsimon MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 December 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/20/3252057

34 Oakcroft Road, Blackheath, London SE13 7ED

- 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 Walker against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/20/115806, dated 16 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is the 'formation of a dormer extension to the rear of the property to extend the existing bathroom to the second floor'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Blackheath Conservation Area (CA) within which it sits.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a large, attractive detached dwelling. It is located within a residential road which is home to buildings of a variety of styles. The proposal seeks to introduce a dormer to the rear roofslope.
 4. The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document titled '*Alterations and Extensions*' (SPD) provides guidance for rear dormers. It advises that they should be of traditional form to relate sensitively to the host building or if a contemporary approach is taken, they should demonstrate exceptional architectural quality. It explains that dormers should be well spaced and positioned within the existing roof slope and should be set in at least 300mm from the eaves, ridge and any hip.
 5. The SPD also provides specific guidance for rear dormers within Conservation Areas. It explains that they should be modest in size and of simple, complementary design, remaining subordinate to the building and the windows below the roof. The SPD also recommends that within Conservation Areas, rear dormers should sit well clear of the ridge, verges, eaves and should be centrally placed on the roofslope or aligned with the windows below the roof.
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6. The proposed dormer would be very large. In order to fit within the existing roof profile, it would have a part hipped and part flat roof. This would appear contrived, even if the angles were to replicate those of the roof lantern on the rear orangery. In addition, the dormer would have a very large proportion of solid form to glazing which would accentuate its overall bulky appearance and it would not relate well to the window arrangement below the roof.
7. The proposed dormer would be in clear conflict with the sound design principles of the SPD. For the reasons outlined above, I consider that it would be an incongruous addition, which would dominate the rear roof profile of the host dwelling. Although the dormer would not be seen from the roadside, it would be visible from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties. From here, the dormer would be seen as a visually harmful addition to the CA which would fail to preserve its overall character and appearance.
8. The harm to the CA as a heritage asset would be 'less than substantial' as directed by the Planning Practice Guidance. However, I attach considerable importance and weight to the statutory duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework explains that 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. It goes on to say that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
10. The Appellants have not suggested that the proposal offers any public benefits. The dormer would not doubt improve the internal space of the existing property but that is a given and I attach limited weight to this factor in the overall planning balance. I accept the Appellants' assertion that roof dormers are a very common feature within the immediate locality. Nevertheless, none of the dormers I saw were directly comparable to the dormer before me in terms of scale, form and siting, which I have considered on its individual merits in any event.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed dormer would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the CA within which it sits. In such terms, it conflicts with policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan, policies 15 and 16 of the adopted Lewisham Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies 30, 31 and 36 of the Council's adopted Development Management Local Plan, along with the SPD; which collectively promote high quality design and seek to preserve or enhance heritage assets.
12. The arguments advanced by the Appellants do not outweigh the identified harm and policy conflict therefore the appeal does not succeed.

David Fitzsimon

INSPECTOR