



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 January 2021

by Michael J Muston BA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/20/3261640
59 Hutchins Road, Thamesmead SE28 8SE

- 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 E Ajuma against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/1027/HD, dated 29 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of the integrated garage to a habitable room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of the integrated garage to a habitable room at 59 Hutchins Road, Thamesmead SE28 8SE, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/1027/HD, dated 29 March 2020, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: site location plan and drawings numbered 01, 02, 03, 04 and 05.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on a modern estate, comprising two storey housing. Hutchins Road includes examples of a number of different house types, some of which include integral garages, and some of which do not. No 59 is the first (heading in a north-westerly direction) of a row of three detached houses (Nos 59 - 63) with integral garages set forward of the main front elevation. To the south-east, the adjacent house at No 57 is set closer to the road. Its garage is

not attached and is set back. Elsewhere are examples of terraced properties without garages, and where parking bays are set in front of the houses.

4. Overall, I am not convinced that the estate exhibits a particularly uniform character, or that, where integral garages do exist, they are an important element of the character of the area. I do not consider that replacing the garage door at the appeal property with a window and brickwork, all to match the rest of the house, would cause any material harm to the character or appearance of the area.
5. I was referred by both parties to other examples where garage doors have been removed on this estate, and was able to see these on my site visit. Some of these appear to have planning permission, whilst others do not. For the avoidance of doubt, my decision was not based on these other examples, but rather on an assessment of the particular merits of this proposal.
6. The Council has also referred me to another appeal decision in the wider area at 34 Princess Alice Way (APP/E5330/D/18/3198119), where the Inspector resisted a proposal to convert a garage into a habitable room. I was able to see this on my site visit as well. However, the circumstances of this case were very different. As that Inspector said, that appeal site *"lies within a modern three-storey residential terrace, where the overriding characteristic is the uniformity of design"*, and where *"the uniformity of design of the front elevations makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the terrace and surrounding streetscene"*. I do not consider either of these statements to be true of the appeal site and its surroundings.
7. I conclude that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, and would comply with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan, and with Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014). These policies seek, amongst other things, development that has regard to the form, function and structure of an area and that comprises details and materials that complement the local architectural character.

Conditions

8. As well as standard conditions relating to when the development should commence and compliance with the approved plans, a condition requiring the external materials used to match the existing building is necessary, to protect the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to the conditions set out above.

Michael J Muston

INSPECTOR