
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 February 2021

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 01 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/20/3262205
33A Ringmore Rise, London, SE23 3DF

- 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 Paolo & Saartaz Ulivi & Mokaddaam against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/20/117044, dated 11 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a part 2, part 3 storey side extension at 33A Ringmore Rise, SE23, together with the construction of a pitched roof with a rear dormer, and associated alterations to the front, side, and rear elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality and on living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is unusual in that it was a flat roofed two storey extension to a, previously detached, two storey pitched roof dwelling (33 Ringmore Rise) which then became a self-contained dwelling with a small garden by means of a 2003 planning permission (DC/03/053075). It is thus something of an anomaly in an area of generally typical mixed style pitched roof two storey suburban dwellings with mid-sized garden spaces. No 33 from its sides and rear does not make a positive contribution to the scene but the locality is a pleasing one visually with houses, gardens, some spaciousness, varied levels and outlooks all feeding into this within an established residential character context. The appeal proposal is as described above and would provide for re-arrangement and significant enlargement of internal accommodation.
 4. The appeal property is prominently located and visible on three sides due to its end of row siting, road alignment, and surrounding and immediate levels. It is presently of no great architectural merit but even with its flat roof it is not
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particularly jarring on the eye because of its ancillary nature to what is around and its modest bulk. Regrettably the planned scheme would be appreciably larger and bolder. It would look strangely ungainly with odd ratios of vertical walling to an unrefined roof, awkward massing, a large gable end at high level when understated hipped roofs predominate in this stretch, and uncharacteristic proximity to, or indeed setting onto, boundaries. The home would appear too large relative to the garden and all the elevations would be stark, imposing in the scene, and lacking in that characteristic degree of subtle suburbia.

5. Policy 15 High Quality Design for Lewisham of the Core Strategy (June 2011) (CS), DM Policy 30 Urban Design and Local Character and DM Policy 31 Alterations and Extensions to Existing Buildings including Residential Extensions of the Development Management Local Plan (2014) (LP) are relevant. Taken together, and amongst other matters, these policies seek to protect the appearance and character of buildings and neighbourhoods. I conclude that the appeal proposal would run contrary to these policies.
6. The Council also cites the Alterations and Extensions SPD (2019) (SPD); this is document which cannot be expected to cover every eventuality and needs to be treated with flexibility. However, a key objective of the SPD is to achieve good quality design appropriate to, amongst other things, context and space available. It is this objective which to my mind is breached by the appeal scheme looked at in its own right. Whilst I am not in favour of the scheme, I do believe that the Council gave too much focus to seeking subsidiarity to the old host dwelling of No 33 or indeed latterly to seemingly seeking almost total symmetry.
7. Under this main issue I would sum up the failings of this scheme, on this plot, in one word: over-development.

Living conditions

8. The scheme incorporates a substantial rear dormer with two sizeable windows. Whilst at an oblique angle the scale of the upper edifice of the dormer and its abutting structure would be relatively close to the dwelling which is set angular and at an upper level to the rear (3 Liphook Crescent). The outlook from this dwelling is not presently extensive given the siting of No 33 Ringmore Rise and the appeal property as it stands but the enlarged bulk stemming from the scheme would mean a further and marked reduction in any sense of space and would be unduly overbearing. Residents in this property would feel hemmed-in to the rear. They would also feel over-looked both literally and as a perception to a greater more uncomfortable degree than the present, far from ideal, situation with the unfortunate glazing in No 33 and a smaller 33A. In my opinion the appeal scheme would represent unneighbourly development.
9. CS Policy 15 along with LP Policies 30 and 31 taken together, and amongst other matters, also seek to protect residential amenity. I conclude that the appeal proposal would run contrary to these policies. These policies share similar objectives to the SPD in terms of protecting living conditions and I conclude there would also be conflict with the aims of this guidance.

Other matters

10.I sympathise with the Appellants' wish to extend and improve this dwelling and appreciate the thought which has gone into the formulation of this design. I can see that there has been pre-application liaison and the Appellants sought to interpret the 'without prejudice' advice which was given and feel aggrieved by, seemingly, a change in opinion within the Council. I recognise that the scheme seeks to make effective use of developed land, would remove very little of the presently small garden, and would provide pleasing internal space for a family. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.

11.I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

12.For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR