

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2021

**by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 17 March 2021.**

---

### **Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/20/3256881**

### **19 Watergate Street, London SE8 3JG**

- 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 C Birch, Latin Quarter Ltd, against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
  - The application, Ref. DC/20/11690, dated 9 March 2020 was refused by notice dated 26 May 2020.
  - The development proposed is an additional 2 No. storeys over the existing property at 19 Watergate Street and 1 No. additional storey over 116-118 Prince Street, providing 3 No. residential dwellings comprising of 2 No. 2 bedroom / 4 person apartments & 1 No. 1 bedroom / 2 person apartment.
- 

### **Decision**

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### **Main Issues**

2. The main issues are: (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host buildings and their surroundings, and (ii) the effect on the availability of parking spaces on the surrounding streets.

### **Reasons**

3. I saw on my visit that whilst there are some taller buildings in the vicinity, the appeal site is read in its more immediate context of the approach, firstly in each direction along Watergate Street and secondly from Prince Street looking towards the junction with Watergate Street.
  4. On the eastern side of Watergate Street the townscape has a distinctly domestic scale with the modestly sized 2 storey houses both fronting the road and set back in a series of mews cul-de-sacs. On the northward approach towards No. 19 on the western side there are the two matching terrace blocks, together comprising Nos. 1-11 and with their flat roofs terminating at three storey height.
  5. As a corner property on the Watergate Street / Prince Street junction, the appeal property (No. 19) is at four storeys legitimately taller than the adjoining Nos. 1-11 given that it steps up to turn the corner and draw the eye as a building with the higher prominence and status that its position deserves. The building is also appropriately higher than the bland elevation of the warehouse style building opposite. And together with its attractive external materials and
-

elevational detailing it diverts attention from the unremitting bulk and scale of that structure.

6. However, an additional two storeys would in my view be harmfully disproportionate to the townscape of its immediate surroundings. The extended No. 19 would read as incongruously tall when seen in its position at close quarters with the other buildings that I have already referred to as providing the relevant context.
7. Furthermore, I also consider that the Council's strong reservations as regards the detailed design and the external materials for the addition to No. 19 are justified. The extra storeys do not need to strictly replicate the existing building, but the design of the proposed elevations with their extensive areas of glazing appears to have been led by the opportunities to make the most of future occupiers' elevated views rather than a need to harmonise with the appearance of the existing four storeys. This incompatibility would negate any attempt in the design to achieve subservience to the host building.
8. The single storey mansard addition in Prince Street is more acceptable as regards both scale and design, albeit the Council's detailed reservations might reasonably be accommodated. But because a two storey addition to No. 19 is not acceptable, a single storey upward extension to its neighbour would be illogical as the corner building needs to retain its primacy.
9. Turning to the second issue, the Council says that the transport statement submitted with the application does not appropriately address the potential overspill parking pursuant to the occupation of the three additional apartments.
10. Whilst I have noted the appellant's information on the accessibility to public transport facilities and the opportunities for walking and cycling to and from the properties, the PTAL rating for the appeal site is 3, compared to 6 for maximum accessibility
11. Given this moderate PTAL rating, it is likely that there will be an increased demand for car parking from residents of, and visitors to, the three new apartments and possibly also arising from the loss of the garage in the existing building (at my visit I was unable to ascertain whether it is in use).
12. As a car free development in a high residential density locality where both on-site and on-street parking are in short supply, I take the view that the proposal would result in an unacceptable increase in parking stress through greater competition for the publicly available spaces.
13. Overall, and taking both issues together, I conclude that the appeal scheme does not accord with the Council's policies, including Policy 15 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011 and DM Policies 29, 30 & 31 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan 2014. There would also be conflict with paragraph 127 of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
14. For these reasons the appeal must fail.

*Martin Andrews*

INSPECTOR