



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 May 2021

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/20/3264652

First Floor Flat, 65 Laleham Road, London SE6 2HU

- 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 Cyril Jones (Maurice Laurent Limited) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/20/116254, dated 23 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a loft extension for the creation of an additional room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Policy 15 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011 ('LCS') and DM Policies 30 and 31 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan 2014 ('LDMLP') seek a high standard of design that is compatible with the character of the area, and which reflects or reinforces the prevailing character of the property.
4. Specific guidance on roof alterations is provided at section 5 of the Lewisham Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2019 ('SPD'). This sets out that proposals which disregard character or obliterate the original roof form will not be supported.
5. It continues that rear dormers should either be of a traditional form to relate sensitively to the host or, if a contemporary approach is taken, should demonstrate exceptional architectural quality. They should be set in from party walls by at least 0.3 metre, and should be a minimum of 0.3 metre below the ridge line and a similar distance above the eaves, and the arrangement of windows should relate to those on the lower floors.
6. In this case, the proposed loft extension would involve a dormer window which would be located on this terraced property's rear roof slope, where the SPD indicates they should preferably be. It would be set down very slightly from the host's ridge and up from the eaves, but one side wall would be attached to the dividing parapet, and the other would be set away from the parapet but would step in to attach to the chimney on the common boundary.

7. In those regards, the scheme would not fully reflect any of the examples of rear roof extensions illustrated at Figure 5.16 of the SPD.
8. Given its large rectilinear form, its relationship to the property's boundaries and its dimensions, the dormer would dominate the host's sloping roof and would give the property a very top-heavy bulk. The partial step in on one side would also give it a somewhat contrived appearance. Moreover, the dimensions of the proposed dormer's large window would be totally at odds with the smaller, more vertically proportioned openings in the floors beneath.
9. Whilst the appeal statement sets out that matching roof tiles would be used, according to the application form the dormer would be finished with smooth terracotta sandtoft tiles. The latter would contrast with the darker tiles on the host and on adjacent properties, and would serve to further highlight the harm caused as a result of the scheme's bulky form and its design.
10. A previous application for a dormer loft conversion at the property was dismissed at appeal (Ref: APP/C5690/W/17/3186489). Whilst this scheme sought to address the concerns raised by that Inspector, for the above reasons, it would still be an excessively bulky feature, which would not represent good design.
11. The scheme would not be visible from Laleham Road. Although public views of the rear of the property from Mountsfield Park were restricted by landscaping at the time of my visit, the vegetative screening is likely to be much more limited in the winter months, and the proposal would also be visible from some nearby properties. Moreover, as pointed out by the previous Inspector, poor design is not readily made better because it is screened from view.
12. For the above reasons the scheme would harm the character and appearance of the host property. It would therefore conflict with LCS Policy 15, LDMLP Policies 30 and 31, and with the guidance in the SPD. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR