
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2021

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/20/3261641

70 Coleraine Road, Blackheath, SE3 7PE

- 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 Mrs Weisberg against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/1582/HD, dated 4 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as *'To convert the loft of the property by adding an in-fill extension between the existing double-pitched roofs of the building and to include a new roof-window on the southern slope of the rear roof. The proposals will also include the addition of two conservation rooflights on the front, street facing roof slope of the dwelling'*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of a loft conversion and infill roof extension at 70 Coleraine Road, Blackheath, SE3 7PE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/1582/HD, dated 4 June 2020, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drg Nos 001 Rev E, 002 Rev D, 100 Rev B, 101 Rev B, 102 Rev B, 103 Rev A, 150 Rev D, 151 Rev D, 152 Rev E, 153 Rev E, 250 Rev E, 300 Rev B and 350 Rev E.
 - 3) The materials to be used for the external surfaces of the development permitted shall match those of the existing building and all new works and works of making good to the retained fabric shall be finished to match the adjacent work.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the development given in my formal decision reflects the description that was given by the Council on their decision notice and which

was repeated by the appellant on the appeal form. This more succinctly describes the proposed works compared with the description that was given on the application form and used in the banner heading above. In addition, I have also recorded the appellant as Mrs Weisberg, who was the sole named applicant rather than Mr & Mrs Howard Weisberg as stated on the appeal form.

3. Since the date of the decision The London Plan 2021 (LP 2021) was published on 1 March 2021 and is now part of the development plan. The Council's decision notice referred to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of The London Plan 2016 (LP 2016), which are now superseded. The main parties for the appeal were invited to express their views on the LP 2021 insofar as it relates to the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 70 Coleraine Road, a locally listed building, and the Westcombe Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling with a double-pitched roof and central valley which runs parallel to the road. It is part of, and sits centrally within, a group of similar dwellings but with different elevations, that are all locally listed, recognised for the quality of their architecture as late 19th Century homes with specific details including their use of yellow stock bricks with red brick dressings, their pitched gable roofs with ornamental ridge tiles, and their distinctive projecting bays. They sit within the wider Westcombe Park Conservation Area (CA). From the evidence before me, including from my own observations and from the Council's published *Westcombe Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal March 2010*, the significance of the CA as a heritage asset lies in the distinctive range and architectural quality of the predominantly two and three-storey Victorian and Edwardian dwellings.
6. The appeal proposal includes two distinctive parts. An infill roof extension that would fill the void between the original double gabled roofs, and a roof window to be inserted on the rear roof slope.
7. The infill roof extension would mimic a similar development undertaken on the attached property at No 68 following a grant of planning permission on appeal in 2009 (Ref APP/E5330/A/09/2103760). During my visit I saw that the roof alteration at No 68 demonstrates that views of these works are extremely limited due to the close relationship between the neighbouring semi-detached pairs at this point, and the restricted sight that can be had from Coleraine Road of these dwellings' side elevations. Furthermore, the proposed infill at No 70 would be recessed from the flank wall of the building such that any glimpse of the side roof profile would retain sight of the existing double gable. Based on the similar circumstances at No 68 and my own assessment, I am satisfied that this element of the proposal would not materially alter the appearance of the property's distinctive roof form given the context of the building's setting.
8. The rear roof window would be a distinctive feature, not typical of a traditional dormer window construction, being entirely glazed and formed with a shallow angle only marginally raised from the surface of the roof slope. It would be set

up from the eaves, down from the ridge and in from both sides of the roof. As such, it would be appropriately framed by the slates on the existing roof. Due to its glazed form and limited protrusion, I cannot agree with the Council's assessment that it would add considerable bulk to the property. On the contrary, I share the appellant's view that it would be a low-key and lightweight alteration that to my mind would add little in terms of bulk or mass to the rear roof slope, unlike most traditional dormers. My impression overall is that it would offer a high quality and innovative solution to providing daylight and ventilation to the loft conversion without compromising the integrity of the building's original design.

9. Overall, I am satisfied that the pitched roof form of the original building would remain principally unaltered, as would its height, scale, and visual interest. In this regard I detect no conflict with guidance for roof extensions/loft conversions in the Council's *Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2018* (SPD), including where it addresses conservation matters. None of the dwelling's distinctive features would be affected by the proposals. As such, I am satisfied that there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the appeal property and that the building's significance as a non-designated heritage asset would be unaffected. It follows that there would be no impact upon the quality of the local townscape and therefore no harm to the character or appearance of the CA, the significance of which as a heritage asset would be similarly unaffected.
10. Based on my findings the proposal would accord with Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (July 2014) (the Local Plan) which, amongst other things, seeks development that provides a positive relationship between the proposed and existing urban context. It would also accord with Local Plan Policy DH(a) which requires residential extensions to be limited to a scale and design appropriate to the building and locality and with Policies DH(h) and DH(j) which relate to conservation areas and locally listed buildings respectively, and Policy DH3 which relates to heritage assets. I also find no conflict with LP 2021 Policies D3 and HC1 which have been drawn to my attention by the Council since the appeal was made as relevant replacements for LP 2016 Policies 7.4 and 7.8. These require development proposals to respond positively to local distinctiveness through, amongst other things, their scale, appearance, and shape, and to conserve the significance of heritage assets.

Conditions

11. A condition specifying the relevant plans is necessary as this provides certainty. In the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to control the external materials to be used.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given, and in the absence of any other conflict with the development plan, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR