
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/20/3262558

45A Meerbrook Road, Kidbrook, London, SE3 9QG

- 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 Stella Weng against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/2104/HD, dated 17 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a loft conversion with rear dormer and two skylights in the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. 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 The Council's decision notice referred to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of The London Plan 2016 (LP 2016), which are now superseded.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

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 45A Meerbrook Road and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a small, end of terrace house, built as an extension to No 45 following a grant of planning permission on appeal in 2019 (Ref APP/E5330/W/18/3205895). The property has a hipped roof to match the form of the original building at No 45 and the appearance of most other properties within the wider residential area. The proposal would include changing the hipped roof to a gable and the construction of a 'box like' dormer to the rear elevation.
 5. The Council's *Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2018 (SPD)*, when dealing with roof
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extensions/loft conversions, states that roof extensions should be proportionate to the size of the original house, and that any proposals that change the roof form should seek to preserve or enhance the existing appearance in terms of height, scale, and visual interest. With regard to dormer windows, whilst it states that they are acceptable to the rear of a house, in all cases it requires that they should be small scale and the windows should be of an appropriate design considering the other windows in the house.

6. The appeal property, as an addition to No 45, was originally designed to be assimilated into the context of its surroundings. This was successfully achieved when it was constructed and I find nothing about the appeal proposal that is necessary to enhance its appearance. The hip to gable alteration that is now proposed would fundamentally change the current roof form thereby failing to preserve the appearance of the existing building.
7. Contrary to the appellant's view, I do not consider the change to the roof form to be innovative. The alteration would simply facilitate the insertion of a rear dormer window onto a rear roof slope that is currently of insufficient size to accommodate such an addition. Neither do I consider it to be necessary to break a monopoly of hipped roofs that are prevalent in the area. The prevalence of hipped roofs is a character feature for the surrounding architecture that is consistent and unifying rather than being ill-defined or in any way harmful. The dormer would be large. Although it would be framed on all sides by parts of the new rear roof slope, it would extend well beyond the original roof, being dependent upon the hip to gable change to accommodate its size. The hip to gable change and the rear dormer would both conflict with the guiding principles of the SPD.
8. No 45A is a corner property where the roof alterations, including the rear dormer, would be exposed to view from the public domain. They would be openly seen as incongruous and unsympathetic additions. Given the very modest scale of the appeal property, the enlarged roof would appear oversized and unduly dominant. The unusually close relationship between No 45A and the neighbouring extended dwelling at No 72 Ridgebrook Road, which sits perpendicular to it, adds further to my concern. The alternative roof shapes of these adjacent properties would stand in sharp and awkward contrast to each other.
9. The failure of the proposal to respect the scale and character of the host property and the surrounding area means that there would be clear conflict with Policy DH(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (July 2014), which deals specifically with residential extensions, as well as with Policy DH1, which more generally requires high quality design in all developments. I also find conflict with LP 2021 Policy D3, which has been drawn to my attention by the Council since the appeal was made as a relevant replacement for LP 2016 Policies 7.4 and 7.6. This requires development proposals to enhance the context of its surroundings by responding positively to local distinctiveness.
10. The appellant has argued that support for the development is offered by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the SPD by encouragement for the better use of land. Whilst I recognise that the extension would enlarge the living space at No 45A this would be achieved at a

cost to the character and appearance of the area, which would be negatively impacted. When read as a whole, there would be conflict with the aims and objectives of the SPD and the Framework's policy for achieving well-designed places.

11. My attention has been drawn to some examples of other roof alterations in the immediate area. The rear dormer to 72 Ridgebrook Road is large. However, the property maintains its hipped roof profile by virtue of its sympathetic two-storey side addition. A similar arrangement exists at 60 Ridgebrook Road. Neither roof alteration is comparable to the circumstances at the appeal property in terms of form or visual impact. The circumstances at 62 Ridgebrook Road appear to mirror more closely the appeal proposal. It is a corner property with a hip to gable change and a large rear dormer added. I do not know the precise planning history of this property. However, it struck me as an incongruous building that was out of keeping with the character of its surroundings. Rather than standing out as an example of quality design, it highlights the harm that can be caused by insensitive alterations. Neither the example at No 62, nor any other examples given by the appellant, justifies a development that in my assessment would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider street scene.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR