

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2021

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3270925

106 Kinveachy Gardens, Charlton, London SE7 8EH

- 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 Mackwin Maton against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/3296/HD, dated 21 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is 'loft conversion: construction of 2 bedrooms and a shower/toilet in our loft'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The loft conversion had largely been completed at the time of the inspection. I have, therefore, treated this appeal as involving an application for retrospective planning permission.
3. The Council's decision notice refers to policies from the London Plan (2016). However, since the decision was made this plan has been replaced by the new London Plan, published in March 2021, which includes different policies. The policies relevant to this appeal in the previous plan are strategic policies dealing with design matters. As such, I consider that there would be no prejudice to any parties' interests were I to rely for the purposes of this appeal on the local policies and guidance referred to by the Council, which address the same matters.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the loft conversion on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two story end of terrace dwelling in a residential road of largely similar terraced properties.
 6. Policy DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy and Detailed Policies (2014) (CSDP) requires a high quality of design in new development,
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while Policy DH(a) includes the requirement that residential extensions should be limited to a scale and design appropriate to the building and locality.

7. The *Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance* Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance to support these development plan policies. It says that while loft conversions can create additional living space with minimal impact, there is a danger that in achieving adequate headroom the new form of the roof could give the house a top heavy look, damaging the character of the house and the street. Also, roof extensions should be proportionate to the size of the original house, and any proposals that change the roof form should seek to preserve or enhance the existing appearance in terms of height, scale and visual interest¹.
8. The loft conversion as built includes two adjoining elements covering the whole of the main rear roof slope of the appeal property and perpendicular to this the pitched side of the rear two storey element. Both elements are built fully up to the eaves and the rearmost element is taller than the roof ridge running between the adjoining properties. Both elements have flat roofs.
9. The extent of this development, fully covering all the available rear roofscape and of substantive height, effectively creates the appearance of a third storey to the appeal property. The bulk, mass and height of the extended roof gives a top heavy appearance and is disproportionate and unsympathetic to the original design and appearance of the appeal property, contrary to the SPD. Moreover, despite the matching materials, it contrasts unfavourably with the roofs of surrounding properties, which are largely unaltered and generally uniform in character and appearance.
10. The heightened roof ridge to the front is a limited change that does not result in material harm, particularly due to the variable topography of the street scene. However, from surrounding properties and gardens to the rear the harmful effects of the extended dwelling as described are readily apparent.
11. I acknowledge that the extension was undertaken to create more living space and that the appellant may have been unaware of the need to seek permission for such changes. It is also contended that the Covid 19 pandemic and lack of neighbour objections provide support for the extension. However, these are not sufficient reasons to overcome the extent of the resultant harm from the extension, which is permanent and which will endure for the long term beyond current circumstances.
12. Accordingly, for the reasons given, I conclude that the loft conversion has an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. Consequently, it is contrary to Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the CSDP and to the SPD, as described above.

Other Matters

13. I have had regard to all the representations made by interested parties. These do not, however, raise any additional planning matters in relation to the main issue in this appeal that would lead me to reach a different overall conclusion. Party wall issues and concerns about property values raised by the construction

¹ Paragraphs 5.42 and 5.43.

of the extension are not planning matters that are within the scope of this appeal.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR