



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2021

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 August 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3271967
48, Kidbrooke Grove, Kidbrooke, SE3 0LG

- 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 & Mrs Alex & Florence Pannell against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/3849/HD dated 14 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing conservatory and construction of a part one/part two-storey rear extension and new front porch (amended description).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as I feel it more concisely describes the development.
3. Since the determination of the application, and the submission of this appeal, a revised National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) was adopted on 20 July 2021. Given the main issues for the refusal reason it is not considered that this change impacts upon the determination of this appeal.
4. Since the determination of this application the London Plan 2021 (a Replacement Plan) has been published by the Mayor. The policies referred to, within the London Plan 2016, are no longer in force. Given the issues raised as a result of the refusal reason, and the Local Plan policies referred to, it is not considered on this occasion that the publication of the London Plan directly changes the assessment of this appeal which ultimately focuses upon design, bulk and impact to the host property and Conservation Area.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are i) the impact of the proposal upon the host dwelling as well as the character and appearance of the street scene and Conservation area and ii) whether sufficient information is submitted to make an accurate assessment of the proposal.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site is a two-storey detached dwelling located within an area which is predominantly residential. From my site visit I noted that the character of

Kidbrooke Grove, as a street scene, is varied. Around the appeal site are predominantly two-storey semi-detached and detached dwellings. The appeal site is located within the Blackheath Conservation Area (CA).

7. There are similarities between the row of five dwellings within which the appeal site stands and the Council's comments regarding the proposed porch detracting from the arched bricked entrance feature are noted. Notwithstanding this, the open porch would cover less than 3 sq./m, be less than 3m above ground level and would be further away than 2m from the boundary with a highway. The appeal site itself is not listed and no relevant Article 4 Directions apply. On the evidence before me this element would likely be able to be constructed under householder permitted development rights¹. In light of this fallback position refusal in relation to the front porch element cannot realistically be substantiated.
8. It is noted that the Royal Borough of Greenwich Supplementary Planning Document Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance 2018 (SPD) states that the materials chosen for an extension are very important and should be related as closely as possible to those used in the original building. Notwithstanding this I do not find the SPD specifically prohibits the use of more contemporary materials. It specifically acknowledges that in some circumstances high-quality modern materials that compliment those of the existing property may be more appropriate. It does, therefore, fall to assess each case on its own merits against the overarching objectives of the SPD.
9. The existing dwelling is constructed with pebble dashed render and facing brickwork with a clay tiled roof. The rear extensions do propose more contemporary materials. At the time of my site visit I noted that the neighbouring property (no. 50) had undergone some alterations including an entrance and a rear extension which is partly visible from within the appeal site. The materials appeared contemporary and in contrast to the original dwelling. The appellant has also submitted details of the scheme at no. 50 as well as other modern extensions, with more contemporary materials, within the local area. I find that this contributes to a mix of materials which form the character of the area. I do not find more contemporary materials would, therefore, be a reason to warrant refusal as they would not be negative or intrusive when combined with appropriate design.
10. I do not find an issue with the basic scale or bulk of the extensions. They would be subordinate, as noted by the Council. Given the irregular hipped roof design of the host dwelling I find the first floor element to be acceptable in terms of basic appearance and roof form, however, it proposes that it would extend across the ground floor split point. This presents as disjointed and, aside from its relationship with the host dwelling, its relationship with the split-level ground floor rear extension would be visually awkward. As a result of this I find the relationship of the proposed extensions not to have been sensitively designed in terms of their relationship with each other.
11. I note appellant's commentary regarding the justification for the design but I find that the design, in turn, creates a disjointed appearance which is to the detriment of both the character and appearance of the host dwelling. I note that the appellant submits that the proposal was designed to be similar to that

¹ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 Schedule 2 Part 2 Class D

of no. 50, however, I do not find the design of no. 50 (as per the information submitted by the appellant) to necessarily be comparable. Whilst the first floor element has some similarity I do not find its relationship with the flat roof ground floor element raises the same issues I have found above with the appeal proposal before me.

12. The extensions to the rear would be extremely limited in views in terms of visibility from the public realm and wider views within, in and out of the CA given the site context including the established vegetation and trees to the rear of the appeal site. Private views of the rear of the appeal site, within the CA, would also be limited as outlined. There would be no impact upon the appearance of the CA or the streetscene as a result of the rear extensions. I find there are several examples of more modern extensions within the area and wider CA which are part of its mixed character. I do not find the proposals would negatively impact upon the CA itself. The character and appearance of the CA would therefore be preserved in relation to the rear extensions; however, it is the specific design and impact upon the host property itself, for the reasons outlined, which I find warrants refusal.
13. Given that I do not find the CA would be impacted by the rear extensions proposed the proposal would be consistent with Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 (CS) Policy DH3 which seeks to protect and enhance heritage assets and CS Policy DH(h) which requires proposals to protect and enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Despite this, the design of the rear elevation would be contrary to CS Policy DH1 which seeks to secure high quality design, and CS Policy DH(a) which requires proposals to be designed to respect the character of the host building.

Submitted Information

14. The proposed plans do not depict the proposed door on the side elevation. The appeal site itself is not listed and no relevant Article 4 Directions apply. Whilst it is of course good practice to ensure that plans are correct within submissions I have no evidence before me to suggest a door could not be created without planning consent (of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the house) nor that the doorway would have any impact upon neighbouring amenity or interested parties.
15. The existing and proposed materials are not stated on the submitted elevations, however, the application form clearly states the existing and proposed materials as required. In addition to this the design and access statement includes photographs of both the front and rear elevations as well as discussing proposed materials further. Had the Council wished for further information as to existing materials they could have, in the absence of a site visit, requested further photographs to assist their assessment which would have been a positive and proactive approach.
16. As a combination, I find the submission is sufficient to make an accurate assessment of the existing materials at the appeal site. A condition requiring submission of further information and/or details as to proposed materials, beyond that already submitted, could be placed upon any consent granted to ensure a satisfactory finish. In light of this I do not find that the second reason for refusal is, in this case, a valid reason for refusal.

Other Matters

17. Objections to the proposals are noted. I have no evidence to suggest the proposal would cause structural problems to the properties which adjoin the appeal site. As noted by the Council, any matters relating to structural stability and foundation requirements would, in any case, be matters controlled by Building Regulations which is outside the scope of this appeal. The Council raise no objections upon the basis of parking and refuse and, in any case, the proposal is still to be a single residential dwelling. I do not find therefore that existing parking and refuse arrangements are impacted. I have dealt with other matters raised in relation to general design, policy compliance and materials earlier within this decision.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR