



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/21/3273808
29 Stratheden Road, Blackheath, SE3 7TH

- 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 H Wear against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/3181/HD dated 16 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is construction of a loft conversion with 2 rear dormer and 3 roof lights to front roof slope.
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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 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 The policies referred to, within the London Plan 2016, are no longer in force.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 and impact to the host property and Conservation Area.
5. The comments of the Conservation Officer are noted in relation to the proposed rooflights to the front elevation, however, I note that officers have considered that the small scale of the proposed rooflights are considered to be acceptable in this instance. I do not find that the limited adverse impacts of the rooflights would be significant enough to warrant refusal in this case so, in that regard, this appeal will focus upon the two rear dormer windows specifically referenced within the refusal reason.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the impact of the two rear dormer windows upon the host dwelling as well as the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is a two-storey mid-terrace property located within the Blackheath Conservation Area (CA). To the rear there is an existing single storey extension. The appeal site is within a row of four dwellings and, whilst I acknowledge there have been some alterations to the dwellings, I find that the roofs remain consistent and unaltered within the row.
8. The Council do not rule out the principle of dormer windows but I find that due to the unaltered nature of the roof form of the row it is of utmost importance that the design is appropriate for the host dwelling within this row. Anything which is not appropriate to the host dwelling would be exacerbated by the relatively plain, unaltered, roof form in the overall row.
9. The proposed dormers as submitted, and it is acknowledged that they have been reduced in height within the original application period, I find to present as an awkward addition to the host property when taking into account the existing windows in terms of both their location and design. The proposed dormers make little attempt to relate to the character of the existing dwelling. The right hand dormer in particular fails to relate well to the window immediately below at first floor level and I find that this clashes unduly with the design of the original dwelling. This, combined with the overall proportion of the rear roof slope which would be occupied by the dormers, means that I find the proposal would dominate and overwhelm the rear roof slope of the host dwelling reducing its visual quality. It would also create an incongruous form of development within the terrace within which the dwelling stands.
10. I note from my site visit that the wider area is of a mixed character and this is noted within the CA Character Appraisal. The Council have not made reference any particular section(s) of the CA Character Appraisal within their assessment. It has not been stated how the appeal site contributes, or detracts, from the CA's significance. The dormers would not be prominent within the street scene and the proposal would be limited in views from the public realm and wider views in the CA given the site context around the appeal site. In addition to this the presence of the petrol forecourt to the rear means I find that even private views of the appeal site, within the CA, would be limited.
11. I find that there would be no real impact upon the appearance of the CA. The proposed dormers would not be highly visible from the public realm due to their position in the rear roof slope and it is noted that there are examples of dormer windows not being uncharacteristic features with the wider CA. I find that the character and appearance of the CA would be preserved when considering the potential impact to the CA. Despite the proposal must still be appropriate for the host property which, as outlined above, I do not find is the case.
12. The proposal would be contrary to Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 (CS) Policy DH1 which seeks to achieve high quality design and CS Policy DH(a) which states that proposals for residential extensions should be limited to a scale and design appropriate for the building and that roof extensions should be designed to respect the character of the host building.
13. The Royal Borough of Greenwich Supplementary Planning Document Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance 2018, whilst it is

guidance, is a material consideration. The proposal is contrary to guidance even having regard for the circumstances of the case, in particular the requirement that the windows of dormer extensions should be of an appropriate design considering the other windows in the existing dwelling.

14. Given that I have found that the character and appearance of the CA would be preserved I do not find that the proposal conflicts with CS Policy DH3 or CS Policy DH(h).

Other Matters

15. I note the appellant submits two previous appeal decisions; however, I only have the decision letters before me and no approved plans which limits the weight I can apply to them within this appeal. Had I had copies of the plans within those proposals it would have assisted with drawing better conclusions as to the similarities of the cases before me.
16. The first appeal¹ considered similar issues to this appeal with regard to two dormer windows. From the Inspector's description within that appeal decision I do not find that appeal to be comparable in terms of assessing impact to the host dwelling. Paragraph 7 of that appeal decision confirms that the proposals sought to replace an existing dormer and that new dormers would replicate the scale, form and design of another four dormers in the other elevations of the buildings. This is clearly not the case for the appeal proposal before me for which I have found unacceptable impact to the host property.
17. The second appeal² similarly considered the effect of the proposal (of which there were multiple elements including a rear dormer) upon the host dwelling and the CA. That appeal was for a single rear dormer which, as a result of its form, was considered not to materially impact upon the host dwelling. I do not have the plans for this appeal before me and thus, from the evidence before me, I do not find that this changes my findings in this appeal in terms of impact upon the host dwelling.

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

¹ APP/E5330/D/15/3141020

² APP/E5330/D/14/2227225