



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2021

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 August 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/21/3269961

298 Coombe Lane, Raynes Park, London SW20 0RW

- 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 Marcus Hine against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 20/P2519, dated 10 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear/side infill extension, first floor side extension with gable end roof, erection of a rear roof dormer with Juliette balcony, insertion of 2x obscure windows on side (eastern) elevation, conversion of garage into habitable room involving alteration of door into window and erection of a single storey rear outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear/side infill extension, first floor side extension with gable end roof, erection of a rear roof dormer with Juliette balcony, insertion of 2x obscure windows on side (eastern) elevation, conversion of garage into habitable room involving alteration of door into window and erection of a single storey rear outbuilding. at 298 Coombe Lane, Raynes Park, London SW20 0RW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/P2519, dated 10 August 2020, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Unnumbered drawings: side (east) elevation drawing, front elevation drawing, ground and 1st floor drawing, loft drawing, elevations for garden walls & shed drawing, plan for garden walls & shed, side (west) elevation drawing.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matter

2. The London Plan 2016 policies referenced in the Council's decision notice have been superseded by policies in the London Plan 2021, adopted in March 2021.

The proposal has therefore been considered against the relevant policies in the London Plan 2021.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed first-floor side and rear dormer extensions on the character and appearance of No.298 Coombe Lane and the streetscene, and on the living conditions of the neighbours with regard outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. No.298 Coombe Lane (No.298) together with its adjoining neighbour at No.300 Coombe Lane (No.300) comprise a pair of semi-detached 2-storey houses. The pair have a traditional pitched roof with projecting gable feature to Coombe Lane and whilst there is some visual symmetry, the garage of No.300 has been converted to living accommodation and the houses differ in their fenestration detailing and render colour.
5. The proposed first-floor extension would extend out over the existing garage continuing the ridgeline of the original house. Although the height would remain unchanged, the proposal would inevitably increase the mass and scale of the dwelling at its side. Whilst this would, to an extent, visually unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings it would not appear visually discordant amongst the other pairs of houses on the northern side of Coombe Lane, which are larger in scale and mass than No.298 and No.300. Further, most of the houses on the north side of Coombe Lane whilst semi-detached pairs are of different architectural styles. The front elevation of some of the houses have been altered, including at roof level, and I didn't find a consistent or uniform appearance to the semis to be a particular defining characteristic of the streetscene.
6. This already mixed streetscene, combined with the position of No.298 and No.300, set back behind the building line of their neighbours means the proposed extension would not be particularly prominent or cause significant harm to the character or appearance of Coombe Lane.
7. I note that the proposed first-floor extension is not set off the front elevation, or down from the existing ridgeline of No.298 which is a typical design response to side extensions. Although there would be no differentiation, or a clear distinction, from the existing house, the extension would be reasonably modest in scale extending only across the existing side garage and would not therefore be a disproportionate addition to No.298.
8. The proposed rear dormer would extend across most of the roof plane of the existing house and continue the width of the enlarged part of the roof. It would be slightly set in from the side of the roof, down from the ridge and back from the eaves. The position of the dormer at roof level would make it visible from the rear gardens of neighbouring houses at No.296 and No.300 Coombe Lane. However, the extent of any wider views would be fairly limited, and it would be seen in the context of the existing large dormer to the rear of No.300. It would not therefore appear particularly dominant or excessive in scale or mass.
9. Consequently, the proposed first-floor and rear dormer extensions would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host house, its semi-

detached pair or the surrounding area. They therefore comply with London Plan 2021 Policy D3, Policy CS14 of the Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy (2011) (CS) and policies DM D2 and DM D3 of the Merton Local Plan – Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Map (2014) (LP) in so far as they require proposals to relate positively and appropriately to the scale, proportions and massing of the original building and the surroundings.

Living conditions

10. No.296 Coombe Lane is a detached house that is set off the common boundary with No.298 by a reasonable distance of around 7m with part of its garden to the side of the house. It is also set forward of No.298, closer to Coombe Lane. This setting of the two houses relative to one another means that the first-floor and rear dormer extensions would not significantly alter the outlook from No.296 from either the side or rear windows of the house. This has been accepted by the Council.
11. The proposed rear dormer window would inevitably be very visible from the rear garden of the adjoining neighbour at No.300. This would, however, be viewed in the context of their own large dormer extension and for the reasons I have given above it would not appear excessive in scale. I am not therefore persuaded that it would have such a significant impact on outlook to cause harm to living conditions.
12. The proposals therefore comply with London Plan 2021 Policy D3 and LP policies DM D2 and DM D3 which amongst other things require proposals to deliver appropriate outlook and to protect the living conditions of neighbours from visual intrusion. In concluding on this matter, I have not referred to Policy CS14 of the CS as this does not specifically relate to the protection of outlook.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have considered it necessary to include a schedule of plans that the development relates to, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty. A condition relating to the construction of the extension in materials to match the existing dwelling is necessary to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given, the appeal is allowed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR