



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2021

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc CIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/20/3259379

First floor flat, 27 Bonfield Road, Lewisham, London SE13 6BX

- 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 Patrick Belfon against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/20/117126, dated 15 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is for the construction of a single-storey rear/side extension with 2 No of rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. On 20 July 2021, the Government published its revised *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework). The Framework represents the Government's up-to-date planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Planning decisions must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is such a material consideration where it is relevant to a planning application or appeal. I note however, in this case, that the main parties have made no further comments in respect of these changes. I have proceeded accordingly,

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area and host dwelling, and;
 - the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located in a residential area of older style brick and tile dwellings. The immediate surrounding area is typified by attractive uniform pairs of semi-detached dwellings that face onto the highway behind small front garden areas and low brick walls. The host dwelling of No 27 Bonfield Road has a paved parking area to the left-hand side when viewed from the road, which in combination with the separation distances/gaps between other properties along the road contributes to the overall feeling of rhythm in the nearby built environment.

5. The host property is a two-bedroomed, first-floor flat that forms part of No 27 which is accessed to the left-hand side elevation of the main dwelling via a stepped and railed access to the rear of the building. On the same elevation there is a window that appears to belong to the ground-floor flat of No 27. The window looks onto the blank elevation of the neighbouring dwelling and the paved parking area. The paved area leads to a timber fence and gate through which steps drop down to the lawned rear garden that is associated with the host flat.
6. The proposal is to construct an 'L-shaped' single-storey, side and rear extension to the ground-floor flat of No 27 that would be constructed in similar materials to the host dwelling.
7. The proposed development would be located in an established residential area. Therefore, the general principle of development on the appeal site is not at odds with the surrounding area. However, while I note the relatively recent permission¹ for a similar scheme on the appeal site, the proposal before me would not only include a deeper extension to the rear of the host dwelling in comparison to the extant permission, but also a right-angled, 'dog-leg' of development to the left-hand side of the forward elevation in order to provide a porch-style entrance way to the host dwelling. As such, the porch would extend someway into the relatively unfettered parking area, and hence represent a substantial and ungainly addition in contrast to the permitted flat-fronted extension. Moreover, while I acknowledge that the proposal would not extend beyond the front building-line of the properties on Bonfield Road, and would only be seen while passing or looking directly onto the front elevation of No 27, the bulk and protrusion of the porch, while not extensive in isolation, would nonetheless be an unexpected and stark addition to the building in comparison to the surrounding built form, which is characterised by an even building line. As such, I conclude that the scale and mass of the proposal would detract from the simple and horizontal lines to the front of the host dwelling and its neighbouring properties, and consequently harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policy 15 of the Lewisham Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, 2011 (LCS) and Policies 30 and 31 of the Lewisham Local Development Framework, Development Management Local Plan, 2014 (LDMLP), as supported by the Lewisham Local Plan - Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document, 2019 (SPD) which say, amongst other things, that extensions will not be permitted where they would adversely affect the architectural integrity of a group of buildings as a whole or cause an incongruous element in terms of the important features of a character area.

Living conditions

9. At my site visit I noticed that the ground-floor window to the left-hand side elevation of No 27 was in close proximity to what appeared to be a domestic gas outlet. Moreover, the layout of the first-floor flat shown on the submitted drawings is such that the window is likely to belong to the kitchen of the ground-floor flat.

¹ DC/19/114617

10. Nonetheless, the fact that the window was obscured by a blind or curtain at the time of my visit, and without the opportunity to inspect the dwelling internally, I cannot be certain that this is indisputably the case to determine that it is a habitable room not or. In any event, whether the room is a kitchen or not, the immediacy of the 'dog-leg' porch of the proposal to the ground-floor window, the relative depth of the parking area, and the oblique view onto the blank gable of the neighbouring dwelling would be likely to render this as a gloomy type room with a limited outlook on to the side of the proposed porch.
11. Moreover, while the Appellant contends that the addition of the porch would be an improvement to the existing permission for the appeal site, I find to the contrary. Indeed, notwithstanding that the main entrance of the proposal would not be directly adjacent to the ground-floor window, the reduction in parking space available to the occupiers of the dwelling, as a consequence of the protruding porch, is such that from time to time parking by the existing or future freeholder is likely to take place directly in front of the side elevation window of the ground-floor flat. Furthermore, while I acknowledge that the parking space remaining would be less than ideal, parking would nonetheless still be possible, including that of high-sided vehicles. As such, the proposal would lead to a sense of enclosure for the occupiers of the ground-floor flat. Therefore, given my combined findings above, I conclude that the proposal would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the ground-floor flat.
12. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy 15 of LCS and Policies 30 and 31 of LDMLP, as supported by the SPD which aims include that residential extensions, should result in no significant loss of privacy and amenity.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR