



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2021

by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3275997

3 Morden Road, Blackheath, London SE3 0AA

- 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 R Sargent against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/0131/F, dated 11 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a replacement three bedroom property with associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2021. This has replaced the 2019 iteration. The main parties were given the opportunity to comment upon the implications of the revised Framework and I have taken their comments into consideration, given that the Framework is a material consideration in this case.

Main Issue

3. Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blackheath Park Conservation Area (the BPCA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within the BPCA whose significance is largely derived from the quality and diversity of the large properties set within generous grounds. Despite the eclectic mix of property types, styles and materials along Morden Road, which range from pairs of four storey villas of grand proportions and traditional materials, to more recent developments, it is the large plots which give the area a sense of spaciousness and defines its distinctiveness.
5. The appeal dwelling is a large, detached property with an extensive rear garden. It sits comfortably within its spacious plot and thus positively reflects the characteristics of the BPCA.
6. The proposed dwelling would have a significantly larger footprint than the existing property, with a substantial depth projecting well into the rear garden. This would be readily discernible through the gap between the appeal site and 5 Morden Road, and it would markedly contrast and appear at odds with the

surrounding built form, which tends to be shallower properties compared to their generous plot size.

7. The proposed dwelling would also fill much of the full width of its plot across two and three stories, which would result in a substantial built-up frontage. Although the gaps to the side boundary would be slightly greater than the existing space to the side of the host dwelling, the current property steps down to single storey scale at the boundaries. Conversely, the proposed dwelling would be of a considerable height thus the limited set-off from the side boundaries would be insufficient to off-set the proposal's significant mass.
8. It is acknowledged that some of the architectural features and materials of nearby properties would be reinvented in the proposed development, resulting in an unapologetically contemporary and bold dwelling. It would also respond to the height of the adjacent properties. Nonetheless, the scale, mass and siting of the proposal would result in a building that would dominate its plot and erode its spacious qualities. It would therefore read as an incongruous addition in this locality.
9. Whilst there are examples within the area where the building to plot ratio is greater than the proposed development, these examples are extremely limited and are not reflective of the prevailing spacious qualities of plots within the area.
10. Given the scale of the development in context, the harm it would cause to the BPCA would be less than substantial. In accordance with the Framework, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is suggested that the proposal would enhance the BPCA through the removal of a nondescript dwelling and replacement with a high-quality development. I recognise that the existing dwelling is more modest than the proposal. It does not however appear to be in a poor state of repair nor detract from the significance of the BPCA. It's scale, mass and siting is reflective of the wider locality whereas to the contrary, the proposed dwelling would be inconsistent with the spacious pattern of development. Therefore, I do not consider that this matter would amount to a public benefit. The Framework is clear that irrespective of the level of harm, great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset, the BPCA in this case.
11. Accordingly, the proposed development would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the BPCA and it would conflict with Policies D3 and HC1 of The London Plan, The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (March 2021), Policies DH1, DH3 and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan, Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (July 2014) and the Framework. Collectively these policies seek to ensure developments have a positive relationship with the local context and preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets. The letters of support do not alter the conclusion that I have reached in this regard.

Other Matter

12. Morden College, located to the rear of the appeal site, is a Grade I listed building, and 4 Morden Road opposite is locally listed. The appeal site, being located within a developed residential area, and a considerable distance from Morden College in particular, makes no real contribution to the significance of

either buildings as heritage assets. This proposal would therefore preserve their setting.

Conclusion

13. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. Therefore, and for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

H Ellison

INSPECTOR