
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2021

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3273569

63 Ashridge Crescent, Plumstead, LONDON SE18 3EA

- 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 Paul Hughes against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref, 20/3833/HD dated 10 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as the construction of a Zero Carbon Ground Floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the Shrewsbury Park Estate Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. No 63 is a semi-detached house situated at the northern end of a group of houses that form an enclave off the main thoroughfare of Ashridge Crescent. It lies within the Shrewsbury Park Estate Conservation Area (CA). To the rear of the property is Shrewsbury Park and there is a footpath running within the park alongside the rear boundary of the appeal property, albeit at a lower level. The appeal property increases in width from the front of the plot to the back.
4. There is a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAMS) produced by the Council in 2013, and the whole area is subject to an Article 4 Direction. There is a Guidance Note (GN) for residents relating to the Article 4 Direction, including guidance on extensions and materials, and this was produced by the Council in 2016. The GN in large part reflects and repeats content within the CAMS.
5. The proposed extension would be constructed to the rear of the existing attached flat-roofed garage. It would continue along the line of the side boundary with No 65 and so would widen towards the rear. It would be of contemporary design and would have a complex pitched/hipped roof that would extend over part of the existing garage. It would have rockpanel low-energy cladding to walls and roof, and would have large aluminium frame sliding doors in the rear elevation. The existing garage would be reduced in length to accommodate the creation of a ground floor wc and shower room.

6. Policy DH1 of the Council's Local Plan: Core Strategy and Detailed Policies (LP) indicates that all developments are required to be of a high quality of design, and to demonstrate that they positively contribute to the improvement of the built environment. Policy DH(a) deals specifically with residential extensions and indicates that proposals for rear additions should be limited to a scale and design appropriate to the building and locality.
7. Policy DH3 of the LP indicates that the Council will protect and enhance its heritage assets and settings, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of its Conservation Areas. Policy DH(h) indicates that planning permission will only be granted for proposals which pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, and that the local scale, the established pattern of development, building form and materials will all be taken into account.
8. With regard to rear extensions, the CAMS indicates that, on the Laing Estate, to ensure a sufficient degree of subordination relative to the scale and proportions of the host building, extensions should be appropriate in terms of height, scale, bulk, design and materials and should not over-dominate the property. In all cases a tiled, pitched roof is needed. In general, the form and appearance of rear extensions should take account of the characteristics of the original house and maintain an architectural unity with both the individual house and the terrace as a whole. Roofing materials should match the original roofing materials of the house, and new windows should usually follow the style and detailing of the original house.
9. The Council contends that the proposed rear storey side/rear extension, by reason of its excessive height, scale, bulk and detailed design, would result in an incongruous and dominant addition that fails to appear subordinate to the host building and would cause harm to the surrounding streetscene, including the wider Shrewsbury Park Conservation Area.
10. The appellant contends that the proposed extension would have virtually no tangible impact on the existing public realm, and would have no negative effect on the CA. Moreover, within the conservation area, there are already many similar extensions, many of which are larger, more incongruous and designed with a great deal less care and attention to the surrounding context. Finally, any impact that the extension would have would be offset by the sustainable construction methods utilised.
11. In this case, I find that the proposed extension would have limited visibility from Ashridge Crescent, and that such visibility would be restricted to that part of the roof that would sit above the roof of the garage. In addition, there would be very limited, if any, visibility from the footpath in Shrewsbury Park, because the footpath is set well below the level of the appeal property and views into the appeal site would be restricted by the rear boundary fence and extensive vegetation cover along that boundary. Given the nature and scale of the existing house and garage, along with the substantial size of the rear garden, I do not consider that the extension would be inappropriate in scale or proportion to the host dwelling, and would not be a dominant addition.
12. However, I note that the design and materials used in the proposed extension would be out of character with the host property. It would not take account of the characteristics of the original house or maintain an architectural unity with the house. Moreover, the roofing materials would not match the original

roofing materials of the house, and the new windows would not follow the style and detailing of the original house. Whilst the rear windows would not be part of the streetscene, they would not respect the basic character of the house, and the roof of the extension would be seen from the street above the garage roof, albeit by a small amount.

13. I acknowledge that a contemporary design would not, of necessity, be harmful to the character or appearance of the host property and the rest of the CA. However, in this case, for my reasons given above, I consider that harm to the heritage asset would result. Although the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial, there would not appear to be any public benefits to weigh against the harm. The appellant points to benefits of sustainable construction methods, but similar methods, including passivhaus construction, could still be utilised with other, more appropriate designs and materials.
14. I also acknowledge that there are many examples of extensions at houses in the surrounding area. However, I have little detail as to the dates of these extensions, and most would appear to have been constructed some years ago and involve use of designs and/or materials sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area. In any case, these examples, and also including those that may be considered out of character, should not be used as a precedent for allowing this current proposal. With regard to the recent extension at the adjoining No 61, I note that it forms an infill between an existing flat-roofed garage and an existing flat-roofed two-storey side extension. On this basis, its design and the use of a flat roof in this specific case would appear justified. The circumstances at No 63 are different.
15. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension at No 63 would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider CA, by virtue of its unsympathetic design and materials used. This harm is not outweighed by any public benefits. The proposal, therefore, conflicts with guidance on development affecting heritage assets in the National Planning Policy Framework, and with Policies DH1, DH3, DH(a) and DH(h) of the LP. Accordingly, I dismiss this appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR