



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: 29th September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3270713

111 Blackheath Road, Greenwich, London SE10 8PD

- 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 Sharif, Sherwood Regal Estates Ltd against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/2665/F, dated 4 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a roof extension to create additional floors, double-storey rear extension and conversion of upper storey flat into two new flats.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

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.
3. The Council's decision refers to policies of the London Plan 2016 however, since the application was determined, The London Plan, The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (March 2021) (The London Plan 2021) was adopted. The Council acknowledged this in their Statement of Case, following which the appellant had an opportunity to respond to the modified policies at the final comments stage. I am therefore satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by my consideration of the appeal proposal against the policies of The London Plan 2021.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the setting of the locally listed building (LLB) at 107-109 Blackheath Road and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Ashburnham Triangle Conservation Area (the ATCA);
 - Whether the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers of Flat 1; and
 - Whether sufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that adequate waste and recycling arrangements can be achieved.

Reasons

Heritage Assets

5. The appeal property occupies a prominent corner site close to the outer edge of the ATCA, whose significance is largely derived from the age and rich character of predominantly Georgian and Victorian terraced properties. The townscape is varied in terms of the height, scale and appearance of buildings, as a result of the gradual and piecemeal evolution of the area. The appeal property is a three-storey mid terraced building with basement, of modest appearance, with the roof disguised behind a parapet. Due to its traditional proportions, materials and design, it makes a positive contribution to the ATCA.
6. No 107-109 (The Graduate public house), the next-door property, is a LLB and has a striking presence in the street scene, created in part by the elaborate detailing on the principal façade and its overall height. The contrast in scale between the LLB and the appeal building and 105 Blackheath Road which flank it, along with the surrounding roofscape, reinforces the LLBs prominence in the street scene and distinguishes between it and the adjacent buildings.
7. Despite the variety in the types of buildings in the immediate locality, the roofscapes of the host building and adjacent properties appear to retain their traditional characteristics. The proposed development would increase the height of the appeal building and would significantly alter its roof form through the introduction of a substantial and prominent mansard roof addition. The proposed parapet wall would fail to integrate well with the eaves line of the adjacent buildings. The proposed mansard extension, despite its setback positioning, by reason of its materials and design, would introduce a top-heavy and intrusive feature to the host building that would further interrupt the current traditional roofscape.
8. The proposed alterations would be highly visible from various vantage points at street level and would noticeably dilute the hierarchy of building heights at this prominent corner location. In particular, the increased scale of the host building and the introduction of an uncharacteristic mansard roof would cause it to compete with the adjacent LLB. It would mask much of its gable end which currently contributes to and reinforces the prominence of the LLB. It would therefore degrade its prominent sitting and thus undermine its significance and contribution to the ATCA.
9. The appeal building is significantly tapered towards the rear. It is wedged into the site and bound tightly by the adjacent buildings, most of which appear to have been altered in a piecemeal manner, resulting in varied and stepped rear elevations. Despite the various additions, most appear to be minor alterations rather than additions that have significantly increased the height of the host buildings, unlike the appeal proposal. Although there would be limited views from the public realm, particularly Admiral's Gate to the rear due to the presence of existing buildings and landscaping, it nevertheless remains that the proposed development would significantly alter the proportions and character of the host building.
10. I acknowledge the roof extension on the building opposite, which is adjacent to The George and Dragon which is also locally listed. However, I do not know the full circumstances that lead to its approval and cannot therefore be certain that it is directly comparable to this appeal. Nevertheless, this example does not

mitigate the particular effects of the proposed development on the LLB in this instance.

11. Taking all the above into consideration and given the scale of the development in context, the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the ATCA. The Framework is clear that irrespective of the level of harm, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits. The proposal would provide a new dwelling which I consider to be a public benefit. Nevertheless, due to the small scale of the proposal this public benefit would be limited and would not therefore outweigh the identified harm to the ATCA, which carries great weight.
12. Accordingly, this proposal would harm the setting of the LLB and would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the ATCA. It would therefore conflict with Policies D3, D4 and HC1 of The London Plan 2021 and Policies DH1, DH3, DH(h) and DH(j) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan, Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (July 2014) (the RGLP) which collectively seek to ensure that developments respond to and enhance local distinctiveness and conserve the significance of heritage assets.

Living Conditions

13. Proposed Flat 1 would consist of two bedrooms which could accommodate a double bed each, thus creating a total occupancy of four people. The appellant states that bedroom 2 is intended to be a single occupancy room. However, given the size of the room and as there would be no mechanism to restrict the occupancy levels of bedroom 2, I agree with the Council's position that it is appropriate to assess the flat against the Government's Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (March 2015) for a two bedroom, four person unit over two storeys.
14. I note that both main parties now agree the gross internal floor area (GIA) of Flat 1. This would fall marginally below the minimum requirement for a two bedroom unit with an occupancy of four people however, in all other respects, I acknowledge that bedrooms and storage areas within Flat 1 would meet or exceed the minimum standards.
15. The appellant suggests that the amount of internal space has been increased to address a shortfall in private outside space. In this case, the Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2016) (the SPG) advises that where it is impossible to provide private open space, a proportion of dwellings may instead be provided with additional internal living space equivalent to the area of the private open space requirement. In this case, this requirement would amount to 7 square metres in this instance and this must be added to the minimum GIA. As a result of adding on this additional requirement, this proposal would result in a considerable shortfall on the GIA for a two bedroom, four person unit.
16. Accordingly, the proposed development would fail to provide satisfactory living conditions for the future occupiers of Flat 1. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies D3 and D6 of The London Plan 2021, Policy H5 of RGLP and the guidance in the SPG which collectively seek to ensure satisfactory living conditions are provided for future occupiers.

Waste and Recycling

17. Concerns have been raised over discrepancies in the submitted information regarding waste and recycling, particularly whether bins would be provided for future residents or whether the existing arrangement, which involves placing bin bags outside the front of the building on collection days, would continue. The appellant has confirmed, in their Statement of Case, that bins for the proposed flats would be stored in the rear yard and future occupiers could access them via the alleyway. I also note that that the rear yard is of a sufficient size to ensure commercial and residential waste could be appropriately separated. This could be controlled by a suitably worded condition.
18. Notwithstanding this however, I note that the rear yard of the appeal site can only be accessed by traversing an excessive distance from the front door of the property along the highway and the side and rear alleyway. Not only is it a considerable distance but the alleyway is also stepped, which would create further difficulties when transferring heavy bins to the highway on collection day. This is an impracticable and unreasonable arrangement for future occupiers. I do not know the exact arrangement for storing and transferring waste at adjacent properties therefore cannot determine whether it is directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
19. I acknowledge that the current arrangement of storing waste at the front of the property on collection days may have associated issues. However, this arrangement is only for one flat with one bedroom thus the amount of waste would be limited compared to the proposed development.
20. Consequently, although sufficient information has been provided, the proposed development would not provide adequate waste and recycling arrangements for future occupiers. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies D3 and D6 of The London Plan 2021 and Policy DH1 of RGLP which collectively seek to ensure that proposals facilitate efficient, adequate and easily accessible storage space for waste.

Conclusion

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

H Ellison

INSPECTOR