



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2021

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3273794

146 & 148 Woolwich Road, Greenwich, SE10 0LT

- 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 and Mrs A Romes against the decision of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 20/3123/F dated 12 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey rear extension to rear of 146 and 148 Woolwich Road to match existing building and 1m smaller than previous refusal, ref 20/1936/F.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I note the appellant's lack of objection to the Council's change of the development description but, none the less, I have utilised the description as per the original application form for the avoidance of doubt. Similarly the application form states that the site address 146 Woolwich Road, however, it is apparent from the plans that the proposal relates to both 146 and 148 Woolwich Road.
3. Since the determination of this application the London Plan 2021 (a Replacement Plan) has been published by the Mayor. The London Plan 2016 policies referred to are no longer in force. Given the issue raised as a result of the refusal reasons, and the Local Plan policies referred to it is not considered on this occasion that the publication of the London Plan directly changes the assessment of this appeal.
4. Since the determination of the application, and the submission of this appeal, a revised National Planning Policy Framework 2021 was adopted on 20 July 2021. Given the main issue for the refusal reason (character), and the fact the refusal reason does not refer directly to the Framework, it is not considered that this change impacts upon the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site consists of two, two-storey, mid terrace residential dwellings. The proposal seeks consent for two storey rear extensions to both the

- outriggers at no. 146 and no. 148 Woolwich Road which would be 1.5m in depth. The symmetrical design and the fact that the roof type would visually match the host dwelling houses is noted. The proposal, for a residential extension, is acknowledged to be acceptable in principle but this does not imply that there should be a lack of consideration as to impact or high- quality design against the relevant Local Plan policies which deal with such matters.
7. The relevant Local Plan policies specifically require that proposals complement the established character of the area. This is the case for all sites regardless of their location or whether considered as "ordinary". The fact that the appeal site, and surrounding area, is not subject to any protective local policy designation nor in a Conservation Area does not change the fact that proposals should be assessed in the context of the character of the area.
 8. The extensions, in the context of the appeal site in isolation, are appropriate for the host dwellings themselves but the issue lies within how the proposal stands within the immediate area i.e. the uniform row within which it stands. At the time of my site visit I walked down Farmdale Road where views of the site itself are not possible, however, the uniform outriggers of the terraced row are notable from this point. The Council have provided Google imagery showing the proposal from the Blackwall Tunnel approach. This, and the submitted plans, demonstrate that Woolwich Road is characterised by this row of Victorian terraces. I find that they have a uniform character and consistent built form in the form of the rear outriggers.
 9. The introduction of an extension at two storeys, even at 1.5m in depth, would result in a projection at two storeys which would present out of character and as a contrast to the uniform row which is currently present. I find this would disrupt the rear building line and established character of the row of terraces and be a dominant and incongruous form of development when viewed in the context of the row within which it stands.
 10. The proposal would not have a good relationship with the rear streetscape and this would be exacerbated by its visibility from certain vantage points albeit character and appearance are differing matters. Appearance is the outward, visible qualities whereas character is the sum of all the qualities which distinguish an area. The uniform row is the character which distinguishes the area. In this case, even if I had concurred with the appellant's view that the site is limited in its visibility within the public realm this would only result in lack of impact upon the appearance of the area. The impact upon character would remain.
 11. The proposal would not be consistent with Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014 (CS) Policy DH1 which requires developments to demonstrate that they provide a positive relationship between the proposed and existing urban context taking account of the architecture of surrounding buildings and the established layout and spatial character. The proposal would also be contrary to CS Policy DH(a) which requires that proposals for additions should be limited to a scale appropriate to the locality.
 12. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance contained within the Royal Borough of Greenwich Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance 2018 (SPD). The SPD states that two storey rear extensions are often discouraged as they can have a greater impact on the street scene.

Other Matters

13. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) is a material consideration and its purpose is to deliver sustainable development as noted by the appellant. This has not changed between the 2019 Framework and the revised Framework. Notwithstanding this, high quality design is a key component of sustainable development and paragraph 130 of the Framework is clear that developments should be sympathetic to local character... including the surrounding built environment. The Framework does not change the starting point for determination which is the Local Plan in accordance with S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
14. A lack of objection from neighbours or other parties is a neutral consideration, as is a lack of harm to neighbouring amenities. How the Council may, or may not, view other sites with similar characteristics or proposals is not relevant to this appeal. It falls to consider the proposal before me and each case must be considered on its own merits. In this case I have found the proposal would be inconsistent with the character of the area for the reasons outlined.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR