



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 19 May 2021

by **L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/20/3255423

8 Streatham Vale, LONDON, SW16 5TE

- 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 H SHAH against the decision of London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/04769/FUL, dated 24 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension ancillary to existing commercial use at front.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

The main issues are:

- the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
- the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 6 Streatham Vale with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

2. The appeal property, 8 Streatham Vale, is a two-storey building with accommodation within the roof slope. The ground floor of the building is in commercial use.

Character and appearance

3. No 8 Streatham Vale occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of Streatham Vale and Aberfoyle Road. The property has a yard to the rear which is separated from Aberfoyle Road by a timber fence. The character of the area is varied with a mixture of building types, designs and uses surrounding the site. Gaps between the side elevations of the side street terraces and the rear of the buildings which occupy the corner plots are also commonplace.
4. The proposal is for a large single storey rear extension which would provide additional office space. The proposed extension would occupy the full width of the rear yard and nearly the full length. The resultant building would occupy almost the entire footprint of the plot within which it sits. The proposal would, therefore, appear as an excessively large addition to the host building. Though the extension would be single storey in nature, it would, nevertheless, create a vast horizontal structure which would not appear as a subordinate addition to the host dwelling.

5. Furthermore, the proposed extension would partially infill the gap between the buildings on Streatham Vale and those on Aberfoyle Road. Such gaps are typical of the street pattern within the area and allow views through the otherwise tightly-knit buildings thus creating a sense of spaciousness. Though the proposed extension would be single storey and would continue to allow some views through to the gardens beyond, the strong, clear visual break would, nevertheless, be degraded to such an extent so as to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area in this respect. This harm would be exacerbated by the highly visible and prominent nature of the appeal site.
6. I acknowledge that the extension has been designed in such a way so as to attempt to limit any impact on the character and appearance of the area. I also note that the proposal would remove the existing timber fencing on site. These considerations, however, would not be sufficient to mitigate the harm I have identified.
7. For the reasons set out above, I consider that the proposal would appear visually jarring within its context and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policies Q5 and Q11 of the Lambeth Local Plan, adopted September 2015 (LP). Amongst other things, these policies seek to secure development which respects the local context and, in the case of extensions have a design which positively responds to the original architecture of the host building.

Living conditions

8. The proposed extension would be situated extremely close to the boundary with No 6 Streatham Vale and, though it would be single storey, would nevertheless be significantly taller than the existing fence line and would be of a considerable size. Due to its position within the site, the extension would run along the boundary between the appeal site and the rear garden of No 6 for the majority of the length of the garden thus effectively entirely enclosing the property on that side.
9. I note that the building at No 6 is in commercial use at ground floor level and that the garden area is apparently not well used. However, it remains possible for the space to be utilised as an area of outdoor amenity space. Moreover, even if the current occupants of No 6 do not make use of the garden space, future occupants of the property may have different requirements.
10. The proposed extension would also be in close proximity to, and highly prominent in views from, the rear ground floor rooms of No 6. I note that as this property is in commercial use any harm in this regard would be somewhat less significant. However, this consideration, nevertheless, adds to my concerns regarding the effect of the proposal on the living conditions at the neighbouring property.
11. In my view, the proposal would appear as a dominant feature in the outlook from No 6 and would lead to an excessive sense of enclosure. The proposed extension would appear oppressive, causing an unacceptable degree of harm to the living conditions of the occupants of No 6 Streatham Vale in respect of outlook. Consequently, the proposed development would fail to comply with Policy Q2 of the LP which states that development will be supported if adequate outlooks are provided avoiding wherever possible any undue sense of enclosure.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

12. I acknowledge that the site is in a location well served by existing facilities and infrastructure and recognise that the proposal would provide some, limited, benefits for example by providing additional commercial floorspace and potentially boosting the employment opportunities available and the local economy. I also acknowledge the further economic benefits of engaging local professionals, trades and suppliers and the ongoing benefit of the additional employees on site utilising local facilities. These benefits are, however, limited by the small scale of the proposal and must be considered in that context.
13. I have given careful regard to all of the above considerations. However, none are sufficient to dissuade me from the conclusions I have reached that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 6 Streatham Vale.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would not accord with the development plan when it is considered as a whole and I have not identified any material considerations which indicate that the appeal should be allowed. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J O'Brien

INSPECTOR