



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2021

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/21/3283173

27 Blake Hall Crescent, Wanstead, London E11 3RH

- 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 & Ms Daniel and Miranda Carney and Richardson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application, Ref. 2023/21, dated 11 May 2021 was refused by notice dated 8 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable roof extension with a rear dormer.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a hip to gable roof extension with a rear dormer at 27 Blake Hall Crescent, Wanstead, London E11 in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 2023/21, dated 11 May 2021 and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this decision;
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building;
 - 3) Other than for the details specified in condition No. 4) below, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 05/1014/PLAN/100_B; 05/1014/PLAN/101; 05/1014/PLAN/102; 05/1014/PLAN/103_A; 05/1014/PLAN/104_A; 05/1014/PLAN/200_A; 05/1014/PLAN/201_B; 05/1014/PLAN/202_B; 05/1014/PLAN/203_C; 05/1014/PLAN/204_C;
 - 4) Notwithstanding condition No. 3) above, the development shall be carried out in accordance with amended drawing(s) first submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and showing (i) the retention of the front chimney stack on the flank wall originally shown as being removed and (ii) a re-positioned front roof light with an amended conservation style design to fit flush with the roof plane.

Main Issue

2. The appeal property is one half of a semi-detached pair with No. 26, with the dwellings having a symmetrical original design. The main issue is the effect of
-

the proposal on the character or appearance of the dwelling; the semi-detached pair, and the Aldersbrook and Lake House Estate Conservation Area with particular reference to the hip to gable extension; the loss of a chimney stack, and the addition of the rear dormer.

Reasons

3. The grounds of appeal state that in its response to a 'pre-app' enquiry for the proposed development, the Council included the comment that '*.....hip to gable alterations are only supported if it is a prevailing characteristic within the area there are a significant number of hip to gable roof alterations completed before the area was given Conservation Area status.....*'.
4. I acknowledge that one of the main purposes of designating a conservation area is to provide the Council with additional powers of control to assist in preserving its architectural merit and historic interest, for example by removing permitted development. This is clearly the basis of the advice given to the planning officer by the Senior Built Heritage Consultant and I agree that very often this is the correct approach.
5. The advice was also that the similar development at No. 26 prior to designation of the conservation area should not be regarded as setting a precedent. However, No. 26 is far from being untypical of the Crescent and notwithstanding the additional controls it is the character and appearance of the locality as it is now, including development prior to its recent designation, that informs the appraisal of the appeal scheme.
6. In this regard the evidence of the Planning and Heritage Statement submitted with the application shows that a substantial number, about 15, of the houses in Blake Hall Crescent have a gable roof. This comprises a combination of those houses with this feature as its original design and those with the alteration as part of a loft conversion and roof extension. Only four pairs of houses retain symmetrical hipped roofs.
7. Given this existing context, in the case of the pair Nos. 26 & 27 where symmetrical frontages form a significant part of their character and where No. 26 has already been altered, I do not regard the re-establishment of symmetry of the side elevations through the appeal scheme to be harmful to the character or appearance of the houses themselves or the conservation area. Any harm arising from the loss of the original hip would be offset by the balancing effect of the flank gable.
8. Conversely, the loss of the chimney would have a noticeably adverse effect, but the appellant is prepared to retain this as part of the proposal. As this would not be prejudicial to any third party interest and is favoured by the Council, I consider it can be the subject of a condition on a permission, together with a condition securing an amended front roof light to one of a more appropriate siting and design.
9. Turning to the proposed rear dormer, this would be flat roofed and although set down from the ridge and up from the eaves would for the most part occupy the full width of the roof plane. The flat roof and width would be in conflict with the Council's residential design guide and the appellants also acknowledge that

'large rear dormers are often unattractive features and cannot generally be considered to be high quality design'.

10. However, because of its rearward siting the dormer would not be visible as part of the Blake Hall Crescent street scene and would also be at some distance, with significant vegetative screening, from the rear of houses in Windsor Road to the west. Furthermore, in the only unobstructed view available from the rear gardens of No. 27 itself and the adjoining houses to each side, the extension would be seen as the middle of three dormers of essentially the same design and scale. In particular, apart from the different fenestration it would to all intents and purposes match to the dormer at No. 26.
11. The photograph on page 3 of the appeal statement illustrates the proposed siting, whilst the submitted drawing No. 05/1014/PLAN/204_C shows the rear elevation alongside the existing dormer at No. 26. And despite the ostensible unsuitability of the proposed dormer's size and design, I consider that both the existing un-extended roof and a dormer of smaller scale / different appearance at No. 27 would appear incongruous in this context of existing large dormers.
12. In summary and taking the three main elements in turn, I am of the view that in the circumstances of this case the hip to gable would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The retention of the chimney secured by a condition would also be neutral, as it avoids harm but as an existing feature cannot be an enhancement. The rear dormer is more difficult to assess because whilst it would not be seen from the public domain and would avoid the incongruity of the alternatives, it would nonetheless be a disproportionate and unsympathetic addition to the host dwelling.
13. In the light of these conflicts, I consider that it would be reasonable to conclude the impact on the significance of the conservation area as being within the range of a neutral effect to one of 'less than substantial harm' to a designated heritage asset and at the lowest point in that range. As such, it would be outweighed by even the most modest public benefit, in this case an investment in the Borough's housing stock in the form of updated and enhanced family accommodation in a good quality period property within a conservation area.
14. This would equate to an absence of a clear and substantive conflict with Policies LP26, LP30 & LP33 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030 adopted in 2018; Policies D4 & HC1 of the London Plan 2021, and with Section 16: 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
15. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring matching external materials will preserve visual amenity, whilst a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans will avoid uncertainty and is in the interests of proper planning. Finally, a condition enabling a minor but worthwhile amendment to the submitted scheme will help to safeguard the appearance of the dwelling in the street scene of Blake Hall Crescent.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR