



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2021

by Andre Pinto BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3278985

57 Birchdene Drive, Thamesmead, London SE28 8RN

- 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 Mrs Jane Gardiner against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 21/1667/HD, dated 6 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is conversion of garage into office space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within a quiet residential road, dominated by small terraces and pairs of semi-detached properties set in fairly similar plots, slightly set back from the main road.
4. Although there is some variation in relation to the design and the general appearance of the dwellings in the surrounding area, there is an overall consistency to the terraces themselves, or between the pairs of semi-detached dwellings, which provide the area with a coherent cohesive feel.
5. The appeal site is part of a four dwelling terrace, running from Nos 51 to 57 Birchdene Drive. The design and external appearance of the appeal site is a mirror image of 51 Birchdene Drive as both dwellings mark the ends of the terrace in which they are located. The same terrace design can then be seen in other locations along Birchdene Drive. It is this consistent repetition of the same design that gives the area its coherent and distinctive character and appearance.
6. The present proposal is for the conversion of the existing garage into office space.
7. As set out in drawing PA3, the construction of the proposed office would replace the existing garage door with a window, raised to some height from the ground level, by a wall. Due to its location to the front of the house, the proposed development would be clearly visible from street level and from

public land, therefore having a significant impact on the appearance of the whole road.

8. The proposal would disturb the balance within the terrace itself, by resulting in a unit that no longer mirrors the design of 51 Birchdene Drive. The proposed change would also result in the creation of a terrace that would no longer be consistent with the design and appearance of the majority of terraces located on the same side of the road. This would affect the visual impact and architectural significance of the wider area. Consequently, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.
9. Therefore the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and, in that regard, be contrary to Policy DH3 of The London Plan (2021) Policies DH(a) and DH1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with detailed Policies (2014) and the Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance SPD (2018) which seek to ensure high quality design.

Other Matters

10. The Appellant has also drawn my attention to other properties, namely 81 and 60 Birchdene Drive, in the vicinity of the appeal site, where similar development proposals have either been allowed by the Council or implemented even if without the knowledge of the Local Planning Authority.
11. The applicant has submitted the Decision Notice to Application Ref: 13/1435/F, issued on 23 August 2013, which is useful and does demonstrate that a similar development proposal has been previously allowed by the Council. Nevertheless, I am not aware of the details or circumstances of these other cases, and in any event, I must determine the proposal before me on its own merits and, for the reasons stated above, I consider the proposed development would be harmful.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andre Pinto

INSPECTOR