



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2022

By Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 FEBRUARY 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3285071
302 Well Hall Road, Eltham SE9 6UG

- 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 Laidley against the decision of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 21/2989/HD, dated 11 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is a small front porch, loft conversion and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property, local area and the Progress Estate Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is in a part of Well Hall Road that is characterised by the Progress Estate, an extensive Edwardian housing estate, planned in a garden suburb townscape design, which utilises vernacular English village architectural style and details. The appeal dwelling exemplifies the picturesque architectural character and appearance of the houses that make up the estate and the CA, contributing to its significance. The CA is a heritage asset to which I have a statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. I must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
4. The appeal dwelling is a two storey terraced house, with good sized front and rear gardens, and has a part pitched and part gabled roof frontage. It sits at the terrace of similar properties, most of which appear to have undergone little alteration or extension, particularly on their street frontage, which retains much of its original character and appearance.
5. The proposed porch extension would be approximately 1.79 metres wide and project approximately 1.24 metres from the front wall of the appeal dwelling. The loft conversion would create a single habitable room. This would involve the insertion of roof lights into the rear roof slope and a window into the front gable of the dwelling. The proposed rear extension would be approximately

5.54 metres wide and would project from the recessed part of the rear dwelling by approximately 2.2 metres.

6. The front gables of the houses in the CA, including that of the appeal dwelling are a pronounced architectural feature, and are prominent in local street views and make a significant contribution, along with the extensive roof slopes, to the character of the local townscape. The appellant has drawn to my attention windows in gables in the area. This includes the window in the gable to the front of 290 Well Hall Road (No.290), which, according to the information before me, was reconstructed after its destruction in the Great War and a window was included in the gable design at that time. Whilst other parts of the CA and other houses in the local area have windows in gables, the window in the gable of No.290 appears as an anomaly to the consistent windowless design of gables in this part of the CA. As such, I find that this part of the proposal would appear incongruous and would detract from the consistent architectural approach in the terrace of which the appeal property forms part.
7. When viewed from the rear garden of the appeal property, the majority of the rear roof slopes of the houses in this part of the CA appear to have had a single small roof light inserted. The proposal is for 3 roof lights, 2 of which would appear to be larger than those in neighbouring roofs. The large expanse of uninterrupted roof slopes are a key feature of the local townscape, visible from both public and private vantage points and do make a significant contribution to the significance of the CA. I find that the proposed addition of the 3 proposed rooflights in the rear roof slope of the appeal property, would be excessive and prominent, thereby collectively interrupting the uniform appearance of the existing roofscape of the local area and would present a visually obtrusive addition.
8. The design of the proposed front porch does reflect the guidance given in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversion Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD). However, the design guidance given in the SPD is advice that should be considered along with the individual circumstances. In this case, the appeal site and the houses in the terrace of which it forms part, which is within the CA, either have no porch, or retain what appear to be their original open porches. Where enclosed porches have been added or open porches enclosed on other properties in the CA, many of which have been brought to my attention by the appellant, it is clear that these detract from the originally intended cottage appearance of the properties. Therefore, I find that the proposed porch would be a conspicuous and incongruous addition to the front of the appeal property, detracting from the appearance of the appeal dwelling, the terrace of which it forms part and the significance of the CA.
9. The proposed single storey flat roofed extension is relatively small in scale and not visible from the public realm. The rear views of the appeal property and the terrace of which it forms part include other rear extensions to houses in the terrace, along with garden structures and tall boundary fences. I concur with both the appellant and the Council that the proposed rear extension would be discreet and, therefore, unobtrusive. As such, this part of the proposal would not have any significant effect on the character or appearance of the appeal property or that of the CA.

10. For the reasons given above I find that the proposed development, when considered as a whole, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, that of the local area and the significant of the CA. This would be contrary to Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), Policies DH1, DH3 and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy (2007) and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), which collectively seek to ensure that development is of high quality design, a key aspect of sustainable development, promote local distinctiveness, having due regard to the importance of preserving or enhancing heritage assets.
11. Although I find the harm to the CA would be considered less than substantial, in accordance with the Framework, great weight should be given to the conservation of those assets. Whilst the proposal would result in a larger property with improved amenity for its occupiers, these are primarily private benefits. I must give considerable importance and weight to the effect on the significance of the CA and in addition significant weight to the effect I have identified. I consider that these benefits do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

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

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR