

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2022

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3280436

10 Westcombe Park Road, London, SE3 7RB

- 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 Angela East against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/0694/HD, dated 23 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is the enlargement of existing lead clad dormers to the rear of the property and replacement of windows to the rear with aluminium to improve energy efficiency within the property
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two-storey mid terrace dwelling of pleasing appearance in an area of established residential character. The house has two fairly modest rear dormer windows as well as a ground floor extension and is not alone in having been modified to the rear. There are a number of roof alterations to be seen locally, dormer windows are not particularly unusual. The locality is suburban in nature with a range of homes and gardens which come together to make a very agreeable streetscene. The proposal is as described above.
 4. The site lies within the Greenwich Park Conservation Area. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected within Policy HC1 of the London Plan (LP) and Policies DH(h) and DH3 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (CS). Also pertinent is the Greenwich Park Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) (CAA) and Greenwich and Blackheath Conservation Areas Management Guidance (2010) (CAMG).
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5. The scale of the planned bulky dormers would be significant. The pair of dormers would be an ungainly combination taking a considerable proportion of roof surface and would create a 'top heavy' dwelling seen in the context of the fenestration below, the building as a whole, and the neighbouring homes. The dormers would be clearly open to public view from Maze Hill and good design should be embodied in all development and particularly so in a Conservation Area. Furthermore, views from nearby properties would be available. The unwieldy roof alteration scheme would be unduly awkward in visual terms and lack the subtlety which would be appropriate for this property and this locality
6. Policy D3 of the LP and Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the CS have relevance to the case. Taken together, and amongst other matters, they seek to ensure that development is of high quality design, sympathetic to its surroundings and integrating in the streetscene, subordinate to the host property, suitable in form for its context, and protective of visual amenity. This is reflected in the advice and objectives of the Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (July 2018) (SPD) albeit that document cannot be expected to cover every eventuality. Given the nature of the scheme I conclude that the proposal would conflict with these relevant development plan policies and the pertinent aims of the SPD. It would also run contrary to the aims of S72(1) of the Act along with LP Policy HC1 and CS Policies DH(h) and DH3 as well as the objectives of the CAA and CAMG.

Other matters

7. I sympathise with the wish of the Appellant to increase internal space and applaud the aim of achieving better energy efficiency. I note that the Appellant indicates some flexibility of materials could arise with the scheme but I have to assess the plans before me and in any event it is not the choice of materials which has been of concern to me. I have considered other nearby dormers drawn to my attention. I do not know the planning circumstances of them all and found some more palatable than others but did not see any direct comparisons in total terms of design, size, siting or degree of prominence. In any event I have to assess the scheme before me on its own merits. I appreciate the Appellant has 'improved' the scheme from the overlarge single dormer which was previously proposed and rejected but, regrettably, I am not convinced that this more recent scheme is acceptable either.
8. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) have been considered. Key objectives of the Framework are to protect and enhance the qualities of the natural and built environment as well as to safeguard heritage assets; development plan policies which I cite mirror these. The Framework underlines that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. The appeal proposal which I shall not allow would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, however public benefits would not outweigh this harm. Furthermore, there are no other benefits, including to the Appellant, which to my mind would be of a scale to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area which I have identified.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR