



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2022

by C Shearing BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/21/3282621

1 Morella Road, London SW12 8UQ

- 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 Serocold against the decision of London Borough of Wandsworth Council.
 - The application Ref 2021/2191, dated 7 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is 'Replacement of single dormer and velux with pair of rear facing dormers. Revised hipped roof to flank incorporating side dormer and replacement of existing velux to front slope.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the host property and whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wandsworth Common Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The area is residential and comprises groups of predominantly Victorian properties of varying character. The northern side of Morella Road contains two storey semi-detached properties with accommodation in the roofslopes served by front gable features. The consistency in the appearance of the front elevations and their detailed design form an important part of the character, appearance, and significance of this part of the Conservation Area.
4. The appeal property is one of a group of four semi-detached pairs of properties of similar character at the western end of Morella Road. The existing two storey side extension to the appeal property has resulted in some imbalance and loss of symmetry within this semi-detached pair and some inconsistency with the other properties within this group. However, due to its smaller roof form including lowered ridgeline and shallow depth, this addition reads as an extension to the original property and allows the shape and height of the original roof form to remain evident. The roof form is visible from surrounding private view points and in public views along Morella Road to the east and also in glimpses from Thurleigh Road to the north. Although I note more screening would exist within summer months due to the surrounding protected trees.

5. Despite the existing side extension and the difference in the ridge and eaves heights, I consider a degree of symmetry continues to exist in this semi-detached pair. By increasing the roof form over the extension to the height and depth of the original property, the proposed development would attempt to merge the extension further with the original property. This would result in the loss of the remaining original hipped roof as well as any perception of the original roof form. This would cause harm to the character of the host property and would cause a heightened imbalance of the semi-detached pair and result in a further departure from the established character of the other pairs of properties within this group. The development would, in turn, diminish the significance that the group makes to the Conservation Area and as such the proposals would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
6. I have had regard to the different roof forms in the surrounding area, particularly those within this group of properties, which includes some extended gable ends. However, the impact of those developments on the Conservation Area, by reason of their scale and enclosed locations, is materially different to the appeal scheme. I have also had regard to the alterations to properties at the far end of Morella Road, including number 30. However, as this property is detached, has a different character and has a different relationship to the street, I do not find those extensions to be directly comparable to the appeal scheme.
7. I note that planning permission has been granted separately for alterations to the roof of the appeal property (ref 2021/0968). However, as I do not have details of that permission before me this does not provide reason to alter my assessment.
8. In summary, I find that the development would cause harm to the character of the host property and would result in harm to the significance of the Conservation Area through the further loss of the original character of the property, loss of the symmetry of the semi-detached pair and the consistency in this group of properties. In this instance I find this harm to be 'less than substantial' in terms of paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In line with the test at paragraph 202, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The Framework at paragraph 199 requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to an asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial or less than substantial harm.
9. I note that the proposals would provide the benefit of upgrading the property to meet the needs of future generations. However, although this could be regarded as a general public benefit I attach limited weight to it because it would apply to any extension to any residential property and its main benefit is a private one to the appellants and their family. The proposals do not include a basement level, which the appellant perceives to be of public benefit, but the lack of something that may result in some other alleged harm is a neutral consideration and not a public benefit.
10. In conclusion, there are not public benefits, or other matters raised, which would outweigh the harm caused to the Conservation Area, to which I must

afford substantial weight. In turn the proposals fail to comply with policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Development Management Policies Document 2016 insofar as they require high quality design, conservation of heritage assets and require that extensions do not compete with or dominate the original building. There is also conflict with the Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2016 which highlights the importance of roofs within Conservation Areas and states it is important that the original appearance of the house in these areas is preserved.

Other Matters

11. I have had regard to the other matters raised within representations from third parties, in particular the impact of the development on the privacy of the neighbouring properties on Bolingbrook Grove. The Council have recommended a condition to ensure the proposed side dormer window would be obscure glazed and non-opening and I agree such a condition would be necessary. However, as the appeal is dismissed for matters relating to the effect on the Conservation Area, this is not a matter that I need to consider further.

Conclusion

12. For reasons above, the appeal is dismissed.

C Shearing

INSPECTOR