
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2022 by A Humphries BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/21/3286655

89 Coleraine Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7PF

- 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 & Mrs Z. Szollosi against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 21/2443/HD, dated 29 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion & roof extension comprising the infill of the double ridged roof, with two dormer windows to the rear roof slope, the relocation of one existing rooflight in the front roofslope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion & roof extension comprising the infill of the double ridged roof, with two dormer windows to the rear roof slope, the relocation of one existing roof light in the front roof slope at 89 Coleraine Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7PF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/2443/HD, dated 29 June 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from 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) Details of the double ring of headers to the two 'bullseye' windows proposed on the side elevation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the works to provide the windows are undertaken. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: Block Plan & Location Plan (463.S10(A)); Ground Floor Plan (463.P11(A)); First Floor Plan (463.P21(A)); Second Floor Plan (463.P31(A)); Roof Plan (463.P41(A)); Front Elevation (463.P51(A)); Rear Elevation (463.P61(A)); Side Elevation (North East) (463.P71(A)); Side Elevation (South West) (463.P81(A)); Section A-A (463.P91(A)) and Section B-B (463.P101(A)).

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of 89 Coleraine Road, a locally listed building, and the Westcombe Park Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The host dwelling is a semi-detached late Victorian property with a double ridged pitched roof, characteristic of neighbouring dwellings. Part of a group, the host dwelling is locally listed. The significance of the non-designated heritage asset lies in the quality of architectural detailing, including large plate glass sash windows, slate roofs with decorative ridge tiles and fish scale tiles to porch roofs. However, during the site visit, it was observed that the decorative ridge tiles were absent from the host dwelling.
5. The appeal site is located in the Westcombe Park Conservation Area (the Conservation Area). Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) places a duty upon the decision-maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The National Planning Policy Framework further advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
6. The significance of the area is derived from the distinctive design complexity and architectural quality of the Victorian and Edwardian dwellings, as noted in the Westcombe Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2010). This was observed whilst visiting the site, along with some limited examples of post-war infill housing.
7. The infill extension between the double ridged pitched roof would be set back from the gable side elevation of the host dwelling. This would preserve the distinctive end profile when viewed from Coleraine Road, albeit that I recognise that the close built form between the side elevations of the host dwelling and the adjacent paired dwellings means that the gable end is not visually prominent in any event. Although a glimpse of the raised party wall for the infill extension would be visible from Coleraine Road close to the junction of Webb Road, the materials would be a matching stock brick which would not detract from the exposed double pointed gable end of the adjoining No.91 Coleraine Road. The double ridged gable end would therefore remain and the changes to the roof form would not result in a harmful visual impact.
8. Several dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the host dwelling have been altered by infill extensions to the double ridged roofs, including a similar development at No.68 Coleraine Road. Observations of No.68 demonstrated that visibility of the infill roof extension is extremely limited from Coleraine Road. I also note that planning permission has been granted on appeal (APP/5330/D/20/3261641 (2021)) for a similar development at No.70

Coleraine Road, although this did not appear to have been implemented at the time of the visit.

9. The proposed pair of dormers, which would be framed and separated by slate roof, would preserve the ridge line and be set back from the eaves and the rear elevation windows to such an extent that they would appear subordinate. The arrangement of the existing rear elevation windows is not symmetrical and the rear glass door is framed by a large window. Whilst the tripartite design of the dormers would be lower in height than the existing windows, they would relate to the mullioned style and appearance of the rear door and window.
10. I note that the proposed dormers would be close to the ridge line and be of a greater width than individual windows of the rear elevation, contrary to the Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2018). However, the paired dormers in the context of the generous proportions of the host dwelling would sit comfortably and would neither be of a disproportionate size nor unbalance the appearance of the rear elevation and window hierarchy. Whilst they would be visible from nearby properties, as are other existing box dormers observed in the locality, the dormers would not be visible from Coleraine Road and I am satisfied would not compromise the significance of the Conservation Area or harm the non-designated heritage asset.
11. I observed roof lights to be a comparatively common feature on dwellings in the locality with two existing roof lights visible on the host dwelling. Although the relocation of the roof light would be more visible from close views on Coleraine Road, this would add symmetry to the roofscape. Owing to the modest size and number of roof lights, which would be set well away from roof features and be set flush in the roof, the roof lights would be subordinate and not detract from the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene.
12. The proposed development would not harm the existing original architectural features of value that are characteristic of the local listing as these would be preserved. The proposed development would also not adversely affect the distinctive roof form of the host dwelling in terms of height, scale and visual interest when viewed from the public domain given the relationship of the host dwelling with the adjacent built form. The proposed development would therefore not affect the significance of the Conservation Area.
13. For the reasons above, the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the locally listed 89 Coleraine Road and would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed development would not conflict with Section 72 of the Act and would comply with policies D3 and HCI of the London Plan (2021) that require high quality designs to respond positively and preserve the historic environment. The proposed development would accord with policies DH1, DH3, DH(a), DH(h) and DH(j) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014). Collectively, these policies require high quality design that is sympathetic to local scale and built form, including the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of locally listed buildings and conservation areas. The proposed development would also accord with the pertinent aim of the SPD to preserve the character and appearance of locally listed buildings and conservation areas.

Other Matters

14. The Council raised no concern in relation to the two 'bullseye' windows proposed on the side elevation as these would be largely screened from view, a conclusion with which I would agree. I consider this matter could be appropriately addressed through the imposition of a suitable condition, as addressed below.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard conditions requiring a time limit for commencement of development and adherence to the approved plans, the Council has suggested a condition requiring the use of materials to match the existing building. In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the host dwelling and Conservation Area, this condition is necessary. In the delegated report, the Council also suggested a condition requiring a double ring of headers to the proposed 'bullseye' windows. This condition is also considered necessary to make sure the 'bullseye' windows reflect local detailing.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

A Humphries

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, and subject to the conditions listed above, the appeal is allowed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR