The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2021 by M Long

Decision by A McCormack BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/21/3288062
49 Inchmery Road, Catford, London SE6 2NA

- 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 Ms Denise Fowler against the decision of The London Borough of Lewisham.
- The application Ref DC/21/123096, dated 16 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2021.
- The development proposed is the construction of a dormer extension to the side and rear roof slopes, together with the installation of a rooflight in the front roof slope.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a dormer extension to the side and rear roof slopes, together with the installation of a rooflight in the front roof slope at 49 Inchmery Road, Catford, London SE6 2NA in accordance with the terms of the application DC/21/123096, dated 16 August 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: IR49.03 (Proposed Plans), IR49.04 (Proposed Elevations and Sections) and IR49.00 (Location Plan).

   3) No development relating to the installation of external materials, including the fenestration, shall take place until details of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

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.

Procedural Matters

3. There are discrepancies in the description of development included within the submitted documents. The Council's decision notice and the appeal form include reference to a rooflight in the front roof slope, and I have chosen to use this description in the interests of clarity.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Culverley Green Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is situated within the Culverley Green Conservation Area where Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The significance of the Conservation Area is largely derived from its Edwardian semi-detached pairs which are strongly characterised by symmetry.

6. The appeal dwelling forms part of a group of eight, more modern semi-detached dwellings (Nos 37-51), which have a simpler appearance than the Edwardian properties yet retain a distinct sense of symmetry. These semi-detached pairs are separated by short distances and remain largely in their original form, however there are roof extensions at Nos 37, 47 and 51. The appeal dwelling and No 51 form a pair, the rear of which is visible from Penerley Road. No 51 has a side dormer as well as a rear dormer with a large, glazed opening and a balustrade which have somewhat reduced the level of symmetry between the pair. A number of properties in the surrounding area, including the older Edwardian properties, have front rooflights.

7. The proposal includes rear and side dormers with gable ends and pitched roofs. The rear dormer would have a similar size, height and positioning to the dormer at No 51 and include a large, glazed opening with metal balustrade. The side dormer would be set down from the ridge line and incorporate an off-centre window in the gable and a rooflight in the front-facing roof slope. There would also be a rooflight installed in the front roof slope of the main dwelling.

8. The rear dormer's size, positioning and glazed opening with a balustrade would broadly reflect the design of the dormer at No 51 and would have a rebalancing effect that preserves the symmetry between the pair. The Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2019 (SPD) states rear dormers should be set down from the ridge line by 0.3m, however there are inconsistent accounts within the Officer Report and appeal statement as to whether this guideline would be met. Nevertheless, while this is a relevant consideration, it is not a requirement, and the SPD also states proposed roof forms should take neighbouring roof extensions into consideration. Given that the proposed dormer would mirror the positioning of No 51's dormer in the rear roof slope, it would not harm the character and appearance of the roofscape or conflict with the overarching aims of this document.

9. The side dormer's positioning would differ slightly from the dormer at No 51. However, its general size would appear in keeping with the existing side dormer and contribute to a sense of balance between the pair, rather than detract from it. Due to its height and setback from the front elevation, it would not appear prominent within the Inchmery Road streetscene. Moreover, there would be limited points at which both side dormers could be viewed together and so any modest misalignment would not have a harmful effect on the area's appearance. Similarly, given the dormer's height and the close proximity to No 47, there would be limited views of its off-centre window and rooflight in the

front-facing roof slope from street level, which would sufficiently mitigate any harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

10. The majority of the more modern properties do not have roof extensions. However, the proposal would be viewed in the immediate context of the existing dormers at No 51. While these predate more recent national and local policies, the dormers remain part of the character of the semi-detached pair. Therefore, the proposed dormers would contribute to the symmetry that characterises the pair. They would have an acceptable effect on the appearance of the Conservation Area, which they otherwise may not have on an unaltered pair.

11. Establishing a sense of symmetry between the proposed dormers and those at No 51 is central to the acceptability of this scheme. Therefore, it is necessary that the proposal's external materials are a close match to those used on the neighbouring dormers. The submitted plans do not contain sufficient detail regarding the external materials and so a condition to ensure that the details of the external surfaces are approved by the Council prior to their installation is recommended to preserve the character of the semi-detached pair.

12. The SPD states that, if conspicuously located, rooflights can be visually intrusive and detrimental to conservation areas. However, due to its significant height and modest size, there would be limited views of the proposed rooflight in the front roof slope from street level and so it would not appear as a conspicuous addition. The addition of a single rooflight in the proposed position would not result in harm to the character of the Conservation Area, particularly as such features are not uncommon in the surrounding vicinity. There is a lack of detail regarding whether a conservation style rooflight would be used, which would preserve the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, therefore a condition to ensure that external materials, including fenestration details, are approved by the Council prior to their installation is recommended.

13. For the above reasons, the proposal would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Culverley Green Conservation Area. It would therefore accord with the Development Management Local Plan, adopted November 2014, specifically DM Policy 31 which seeks to ensure proposals for roof extensions are site specific and respect the form and detailing of original buildings. It would further accord with DM Policy 30 which seeks to ensure proposals attain a high standard of design and DM Policy 36 which seeks to prevent development that is incompatible with the special characteristics of conservation areas and its buildings. The proposal would also accord with the Core Strategy, adopted June 2011, specifically Policy 15 and Policy 16 which together seek to ensure that development conserves and enhances conservation areas. There would be no conflict with Policy HC1 of The London Plan, adopted March 2021, which seeks to ensure that development proposals conserve the significance of heritage assets.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time period for commencement, I recommend a condition requiring that development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, which is necessary for certainty and precision.

15. As mentioned above, a condition that requires the details of the external surface materials to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority prior to their installation is recommended. This is to ensure a close match to the dormer extensions at No 51, which is necessary to preserve the character and appearance of the semi-detached pair.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. The proposed development would accord with the development plan, when considered as a whole. Based on the above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

M Long

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 the appeal is allowed.

A McCormack

INSPECTOR