



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 April 2022

by L Douglas BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/21/3280310

121 Plumstead Common Road, Plumstead SE18 2UQ

- 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 Mitul Patel against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 20/3965/F, dated 22 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is 'Construction of an additional storey and single storey rear extension to facilitate the creation of 2 x 1-bed residential units and an access on the ground floor'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of the development proposed for the banner heading above from the Council's decision notice, as this more clearly describes what is shown on the proposed plans. The appellant has referred to this description within the appeal form, confirming it describes the development they are seeking planning permission for.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the Plumstead Common Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a corner plot occupied by a single storey building in use as a shop, with a flat roof. Land levels fall to the rear, along its side elevation which faces onto Blendon Terrace, resulting in its rear elevation on Wernbrook Street having the appearance of a 2 storey building. Houses within Blendon Terrace, Wernbrook Street and Plumstead Common Road face onto the appeal building, which is prominent in all views on account of its exposed position on the junctions of these roads.
5. The CA is centred around historic common land and takes in a number of buildings ranging in age from the early-Victorian period to more recent developments. This part of the CA is mainly characterised by nineteenth century terraced housing, with small commercial units at ground floor level fronting onto Plumstead Common Road. As a purpose built late-twentieth century commercial unit with small high-level windows on its side elevation and

- a loading bay at the rear, the appeal building is an uncharacteristic feature of the CA, which does not make a positive contribution to its character or appearance.
6. It is proposed to erect a flat roofed first floor and rear extension to the appeal building to create 2 flats, which would incorporate bin and bicycle stores at ground floor level and terraces partially enclosed by railings at first floor level. The front elevation of the proposal would follow the form and roofline of the neighbouring 2 storey property. The side elevation of the proposal along Blendon Terrace would be set back behind the existing façade.
 7. The proposed set back first floor level along Blendon Terrace would add limited interest to this plain elevation of the appeal building. The significant depth of the proposal and expanse of brickwork facing the terraced houses opposite would create a large, uninspiring feature in the street scenes of Blendon Terrace and Wernbrook Street. To the rear and sides, along those residential streets, the proposal would be seen as a dominant and bulky addition to the prominent corner plot, out of scale with surrounding buildings. This would be on account of the substantial increase in building mass and the lower land levels at the rear of the appeal building.
 8. Low-level railings would be fitted to a wall enclosing the terrace which would serve proposed Flat 1. Although balconies enclosed by railings can be seen on other modern buildings facing onto Plumstead Common Road, the proposed terrace would be an intrusive feature in the more intimate surroundings of Blendon Terrace and Wernbrook Street. The unduly dominant proposed development would be experienced in the context of modest terraced houses abutting the common to the north, and the short, low-level rear projections of neighbouring properties on Plumstead Common Road.
 9. In views along Plumstead Common Road, the design of the front elevation of the proposed extension would be similar to that of the neighbouring properties to the east. The proposed plans show a cornice and ornamental features above the proposed first floor windows which would adjoin and match those seen on the neighbouring properties. However, the coherent design of the front elevation would not ensure the proposal, as a whole, would blend sympathetically with its surroundings or preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
 10. Although the appeal building in its present form fails to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the CA, the proposed development would exacerbate the appeal building's impact on the surrounding area, and would be more harmful to the character and appearance of the CA. The proposed development would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and would be contrary to Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Policies DH1, DH3 and DH(h) of the Council's Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014). These require, amongst other things, development to be of high quality design which has a positive relationship with its surroundings and conserves the significance of heritage assets.
 11. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that where a proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, as would be the case in this instance, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I attach moderate weight

to the modest benefits resulting from the provision of 2 one-bedroom flats. That public benefit would not outweigh the harm I have identified, which attracts significant weight.

Other Matters

12. I have been referred to a previous appeal decision¹ relating to a different, larger proposal at the appeal site. Based on the information I have been provided I can see that there are significant differences between the proposals. I note the appellant's claims that the previous Inspector did not criticise the depth or terraces of the larger proposal, but as that Inspector was considering a substantially different scheme which was found to be overly dominant and out of scale with its surroundings it would be wrong to suggest the previous Inspector had no concerns in those regards. The previous appeal decision does not lead me to conclude the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the CA and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate my decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

L Douglas

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/E5330/W/17/3191817