



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/22/3296862

428 – 430 Well Hall Road, Eltham SE9 6UD

- 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 Thirunavukkarasu Ketheswaran against the decision of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 21/3847/F, dated 24 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 January 2022.
 - The development is a loft conversion with rear dormer and 3 no. rooflights to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. In accordance with an email from the agent dated 12 April 2022, I have taken the appellant's full name from the appeal form.
3. The rear dormer and the front rooflights the subject of this appeal are already in place. I have therefore dealt with the scheme on the basis of the retention of the existing development. The Council raises no objection to the front rooflights, and given their modest size and unobtrusive profile, neither do I.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the rear dormer on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

5. The Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2018 ('SPD') sets out that extensions should be sensitive to the original building and the buildings around it, and should respect the character of the area. It continues at paragraphs 5.46 and 5.48 that dormers should be small scale, and that full width dormers will be discouraged as they do not integrate well with pitched roof houses.
6. The appeal site sits within a parade, with commercial units at ground floor and flats or other uses above. The flats above the retail unit at 428 to 430 Well Hall Road are accessed from a rear service lane, via an external staircase and the flat roof of a long single storey rear extension. That extension has a limited visual impact on the area given its low height.

7. Given various alterations and extensions, the rear of this parade displays considerably less cohesion than its front face. Nevertheless, its main roof retains a fairly simple, pitched form, which is punctuated by chimneys, and by a small dormer window at the end closest to its junction with Westmount Road.
8. The dormer as built at Nos 428 to 430 is larger compared to the dormer permitted as part of planning application Ref 09/1865/F ('permitted scheme'), and much larger compared to the single other dormer in this parade. Its side walls extend to the chimneys around the property's boundaries, its flat roof is set only marginally below the host's ridge, and it almost reaches the eaves line. As a result, the dormer entirely dominates the host's rear roof, with very little of its original sloping roof remaining, and the property has a very top-heavy appearance.
9. Although there are other dormers in the vicinity, including to the rear of nearby properties on Westmount Road, I did not observe any whose bulk and scale dominates the respective host property to the extent that this scheme does. Whilst I have considered the context of the permitted scheme including the host's large ground floor rear extension, the scale and mass of this dormer high up on the roof overwhelms the rear face of the host property and it significantly disrupts the parade's fairly cohesive roofscape.
10. Consequently, the scheme harms the character and appearance of the host property and the area. That harm is visible from nearby properties, as well as when looking across the rear of the parade from Westmount Road.
11. For the above reasons, the rear dormer conflicts with those parts of Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021, and Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014, which require high quality design that enhances the local context, having regard to matters such as the bulk and massing of the adjacent townscape; and which require roof extensions to respect the scale and character of the host building and the surrounding area. It also conflicts with the guidance in the SPD.
12. I understand that, compared to the permitted scheme, the development as built facilitates better thermal recovery. It also makes a slightly more efficient use of the land to provide improved accommodation, in accordance with that stance in the National Planning Policy Framework. However, it does not satisfy the Framework's requirement for good design, and those limited benefits do not outweigh the significant harm that it has caused.
13. Consequently, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR