
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2022

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16TH September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/22/3299647
123 Tressillian Road, London SE4 1XZ

- 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 Stefan Shaw against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/22/125338, dated 4 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as the retention of a conservation style rooflight in the front roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to this 2 storey, terraced house which is located within the Brockley Conservation Area. The conservation area contains a variety of Victorian houses of differing sizes and styles mostly containing attractive features in their designs.
4. The Council has published its 'Brockley Conservation Area Character Appraisal' which identifies differing character areas. In addition, it identifies features which are damaging to and threaten the character of the conservation area. Within this category it states that rooflights add visual clutter to front plain slopes that were not intended to be pierced and often result in a modern appearance. It states that within the conservation area as a whole 9% of dwellings have rooflights within the front roof (at the time of publication) and identifies some roads where they are more prevalent. This is reinforced in the 'Brockley Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document' which states that "roof lights in front roof slopes are not suitable due to their intrusive impact on the regular appearance of roofs in the area".
5. The Council's 'Alterations and Extensions SPD' offers guidance in relation to various forms of development. General guidance is offered and then more specifically given for developments within the Borough's conservation areas.

6. The rooflight that has been installed at the appeal site is one of a small number within this road. The neighbouring property at No 125 has a much smaller rooflight within its front roof but there are generally few within this long road and the overwhelming majority of houses do not have a rooflight in the front roof. Although the proportions within the conservation area may have changed over time since the publication of the Brockley Conservation Area Character Appraisal, front rooflights are not the norm and certainly do form an 'established characteristic' as suggested by the appellant, in my judgement. The Council has indicated that those referred to by the appellant do not appear on their electronic record of planning permissions (although it is not clear how far back these extend to).
7. Although the rooflight which is the subject of this appeal is of a 'conservation' style, I consider that its size and positioning within the front roof slope make it as obvious feature which is out of character with the qualities of the area. I agree with the general statements made by the Council, that rooflights appear intrusive within the generally regular roof-scape here. Whilst there is a number of examples that I have seen in the area, I consider that they detract from the character and appearance of the area and cause harm, rather than forming part of the established character. Some of the examples of appeals referred to by the appellant do not relate to this conservation area and so are of little assistance to me in determining the appeal.
8. The appellant states that the rooflight is required to give light/ventilation to a small bathroom within the extended roof accommodation of the property. This alteration was granted permission by the Council without the rooflight. Whilst I can understand the appellant's desire for natural lighting within the small bathroom, I do not consider that it is an absolute necessity and not one which outweighs the visual harm that I have identified.
9. In conclusion, I consider that the rooflight appears intrusive and fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are no public benefits which outweigh this harm. As a consequence, the development is contrary to Policies 15 and 16 of the Core Strategy (2011), Policies 30 and 36 of the Development Management Local Plan (2014), Policy HC1 of The London Plan as well as the Councils supplementary publications referred to above. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

T Wood

INSPECTOR