



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2022

by G Sylvester BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/D/22/3295075

187 Lower Morden Lane, Morden SM4 4SP

- 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 Kirk Pullen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 21/P3072, dated 22 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is for Application for Householder Planning Permission in respect of the proposed front bay window extension to match existing at ground and first floor, a hip to gable extension, and rear roof dormer extensions over existing at first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I noted on my visit to the site that the appearance of the property did not match the existing drawings, in respect of alterations to its roof. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted drawings.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

4. Although the appeal property has been altered and extended, the pair of semi-detached houses (Nos 185-187), have retained a sense of balance and unity. They display comparable features such as side facing hipped roofs and centrally positioned forward projecting bays. As such, the appeal property and no. 185, contribute positively to the uniformity and rhythm of this attractive street scene, which is defined by similar style period houses fronting the Lane.
5. The replacement of the existing hipped roof with a gabled roof, would remove an important characteristic feature of the house. The proposed gabled roof form and wide rear dormer, would be bulky additions to the roof of the house, widening its roof line and disrupting the roof slopes. The bulk of the dormer extension would be particularly noticeable from Tudor Drive, where the rear wall is visible through the gaps between buildings. The scale and position of

the proposed forward projecting bay would give the house an unduly wide, double fronted appearance, that is uncharacteristic of this part of the Lane.

6. The proposed extensions would disproportionately increase the size and massing of the house, particularly its front and side elevations. They would unbalance the pair of semi detached houses and erode their sense of unity as a pair. This would be particularly noticeable from Lower Morden Lane, where the appeal property occupies a prominent position and where the bulky extensions would be highly visible.
7. In this context, I find that the proposed extensions would fail to complement the design of the existing house. They would be visually discordant and would erode the positive contribution of the house, including No 185, to the uniformity of this attractive street scene. The matching materials of the proposed extensions would not overcome this harm.
8. Two storey front bays are present towards the ends of the front elevations of Nos 27, 33, 55, 65, 77-79, 107 and 121-123 Lower Morden Lane. I saw on my site visit that these properties did not feature gabled main roofs. They are not located in positions as prominent as the appeal site and did not appear to be visible with the appeal site. Furthermore, I have no details relating to any planning permissions for them and the policy context prevailing at the time.
9. I note that Nos 111, 149 and 159 Lower Morden Lane, feature gable roofs and dormers on the rear roof slopes. I also saw that both houses on the entrance to Cardinal Avenue have gabled roofs and rear dormers. Again, I have no details relating to any planning permissions for them and the policy context under which they were considered. I saw that these properties appeared narrower in width than the appeal property and do not feature a second front bay on the end of the front elevation. Whilst the gabled flank elevation of No 159, can be seen with the appeal property, it is far less prominent given its position within the row of properties. The roofs of the adjacent properties provide a good level of screening of this gable in longer distance views.
10. My attention has been drawn to roof extensions that have recently been permitted in the Borough at Nos 299 and 391 Cannon Hill Lane, and No 32 Cranleigh Road. I have read the Appeal Decisions for Nos 299 and 391. In the case of No 299, I am aware that the Inspector found that many houses in that area had similar such extensions, creating a well established pattern of development. In the case of No 391, I note that the Inspector found the gabled extension to be in-keeping with the roofscape in that area and that it would largely replace a view of an obtrusive dormer. The details of the planning permission for No 32, show it located within a row of properties and separated from the neighbouring gabled property by a relatively narrow gap.
11. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the examples referred to above are sufficiently different in character and context to the appeal proposal. As such they are not directly comparable and do not justify me reaching a different view on the harm caused by the appeal proposal.
12. I conclude that the appeal scheme would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and area. It is therefore contrary to Policy D3 of The London Plan (2021), Policy CS 14 of the London Borough of Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy (2011), Policies DM D2 and DM D3 of the London Borough of Merton Local Plan - Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps

(2014), which amongst other objectives, require development and extensions to be of high quality design, relate positively to their surroundings and complement the host building. The policies are consistent with Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), which requires developments to be sympathetic to local character, amongst other matters.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge that permitted development rights do exist for the enlargement of homes. However, I have seen nothing to indicate that a comparable scheme or greater would be a permitted form of development. As such, this matter carries little weight and does not lead me away from my conclusion on the main issue.
14. I appreciate that the appellant is seeking additional accommodation to improve the living conditions for his family and accommodate space for home working. Whilst I have given the appellant's personal circumstances consideration, I am mindful of the advice contained in Planning Practice Guidance that planning is mainly concerned with the use of land in the public interest. It is also probable that the significant visual harm caused by the appeal development would persist long after the current personal circumstances cease. I therefore find that this matter carries limited weight and is not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole. This conflict is not outweighed by any other considerations. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

G Sylvester

INSPECTOR