The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2022

by S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/22/3303245
518 Rochester Way, London SE9 1SQ

- 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 Miss Julie Bishop against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Greenwich.
- The application Ref 21/4490/HD, dated 16 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2022.
- The development proposed is the replacement of the windows and front door.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have edited the description of development provided on the planning application form to more succinctly describe the appeal scheme.

3. The replacement windows and door have been installed and therefore this appeal relates to a retrospective planning application.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the appeal scheme preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Progress Estate Conservation Area and its effect on the character and appearance of the host property.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a 2-storey house that forms one end of a short terrace. It is situated in a residential street in the Progress Estate Conservation Area (PECA). The Estate was constructed in 1915 by the Office of Works to house the munitions workers who worked at Woolwich Arsenal. It is a relatively well-preserved example of the garden suburb movement of town planning featuring low density housing laid out in an informal picturesque fashion with ample green spaces.

6. Whilst the Estate retains its original layout and overall character, the houses feature a wide variety of types and styles of windows and doors as these have been replaced over the years. Plastic windows predominate. These vary in respect of their frame sizes, proportions and glazing bar arrangements. Similarly, there is a wide variety of front doors, many of which are off-the-peg designs that are at odds with the Arts and Crafts character of the houses.

7. The installation of inappropriate windows and doors has denuded the character and appearance of the PECA. To combat this the Council has put in place an Article 4 Direction and published guidance on minor alterations. In respect of windows the Progress Estate Article 4 guidance note (1998) accepts the use of uPVC framed windows but, in order to ensure a level of consistency throughout the Estate, sets out clear guidance on the size of frames and positioning of glazing bars.

8. The appeal scheme includes the replacement of the appeal property's windows with white uPVC windows. These have far chunkier frames than the windows they replaced and incorporate internal glazing bars. In these respects the windows are contrary to the guidance note and in my judgement they have an unacceptable effect on the appearance of the appeal property and therefore fail to preserve the character of the PECA.

9. The appellant refers to the windows installed in nearby properties. Whilst I note that the vast majority are uPVC, many of these installations demonstrate the level of harm that can occur where care is not taken to ensure that replacement windows are designed sensitively.

10. The appeal scheme also includes the replacement of the front door. The Council's guidance seeks to ensure replacement doors replicate the original styles and it provides examples of acceptable door configurations. The replacement door is an off-the-peg uPVC door that does not reflect the original doors. In addition, its replacement has included the removal of the shallow canopy above the door and decorative brackets, resulting in additional harm to the appearance of the appeal property and the PECA.

11. For these reasons I conclude that the appeal scheme is contrary to Policies DH1, DH3 and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan, Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) which seek development that pays special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. It is also contrary to the aims of Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), the Progress Estate Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2007), the Progress Estate Conservation Area Management Strategy (2007), and the aforementioned guidance.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole

INSPECTOR