



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2022

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 NOVEMBER 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/W/22/3295217

27 Cochrane Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 3QP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the development of land without complying with conditions subject to which a previous planning permission was granted.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Petrie against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 21/P0941, dated 25 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 September 2022.
 - The application sought planning permission for the conversion of a single dwellinghouse into 3 x self-contained flats, involving the erection of a single and two-storey side extensions and a single storey rear extension, plus the erection of a hip to gable with L-shaped rear roof extension with two new Velux windows to the front roof slope without complying with a condition attached to planning permission Ref 18/P2661, dated 26 June 2019.
 - The condition in dispute is No 2 which states that:
"The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 241 PL 202, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 215 and 216".
 - The reason given for the condition is:
"For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. Planning permission was granted on appeal in 2019¹ for the conversion of 27 Cochrane Road into three self-contained flats, including extensions to facilitate the conversion, and Condition 2 attached to that permission set out the approved plans. The appellants now wish to erect a larger rear extension to create additional living space for the proposed flats, and therefore seek to vary Condition 2 so that it refers to revised approved drawings.
3. Having regard to all the evidence before me, I consider that the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the amended scheme on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

¹ PINS Ref: APP/T5720/W/19/3223487

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two-storey end terrace house, brick built and with pitched roofs, at the end of a residential cul-de-sac. The site is bounded to the north by the Wimbledon railway yard, beyond which lies the main railway line, though the surrounding area is primarily residential, the built form of the appeal property appears to be typical of the neighbourhood.
5. At present, the appeal property has a two-storey rear outrigger, with a pitched roof, which appears to be an original part of the building. Beyond this is a small, flat-roofed L-shaped storage or utility room extension to the kitchen. Under the 2019 approved scheme, the existing extension would be demolished and a larger L-shaped extension, wrapping round the outrigger, erected at ground floor level. The existing loft would be converted to provide a self-contained one-bedroom flat, with the existing hipped roof converted to a gable, and box dormers constructed on both the rear roof slope and the side-facing pitch of the rear outrigger. A three-storey side extension would accommodate the staircase to the upper flats.
6. The principal differences between the 2019 permission and the amended scheme which the appellants are now proposing relate to the rear parts of the development. The first floor would be extended across the full width of the existing building, rather than simply internally reconfiguring the outrigger. At loft level, the new second floor would be the same depth as the first floor below and, although it would not extend across the full width of the building, it would be wider than the existing outrigger.
7. Although at the rear of the appeal site, the extension would be highly visible from the rear of properties on Newton Road to the west and (albeit to a lesser extent) from the railway line and adjacent footpath to the north. The form of the existing outrigger would be completely subsumed into the larger extensions at first and second floor levels. The bulk and massing of the additions would give the appeal property the appearance of being a full three-storey building at the rear; the small set-backs from floors below (at the rear of the first floor and the side of the second floor) would not significantly reduce this impression. The large roof extensions to accommodate the enlarged second floor flat would be a bulky and dominant addition to the property and would result in the almost complete loss of the pitched roofs at the rear of the building. The scheme as a whole would be a cumbersome and incongruous development and would harmfully alter the character and appearance of the dwelling.
8. The appellants suggest that there are several examples of flat-roofed outriggers within the surrounding area; they particularly drew my attention to the neighbouring property (25 Cochrane Road) which they describe as having a "two-storey crown-pitch design with a large area of flat-roof". However, all the evidence before me, including my observations on site, suggests that in fact the scale and form of the roof extensions at No 25 are much more akin to the extensions already permitted at the appeal property by the 2019 permission. The revised scheme which the appellants now wish to develop would be larger and bulkier than that next door and, for the reasons I have just set out, it would be harmful to the appearance of the host property.
9. I saw on my site visit that there are in the area some examples of roof extensions which appear to come close in their form and scale to the appeal scheme, although even then none seemed to be quite as large or bulky as the

proposal now before me. I was not able to see these other examples in close-up views, and I do not know the precise circumstances in which they came into being. Even in the more distant views which were possible between blocks or across the railway lines, however, I saw that such extensions have broken up the traditional pitched roof form of rear outriggers in the area. The largest examples, most akin to the proposal before me, detract from the quality of the housing and, as a result, they diminish the character and appearance of the area. They do not therefore, in my view, amount to a precent which would justify allowing the scale and form of the proposed development.

10. Finally, I note the appellants' argument that "any negative impact of the proposed design changes is so marginal that it does not outweigh the benefit of enhancing the accommodation of the proposed development". For the reasons I have just set out, I do not agree that the impact of the proposed development would, when compared to the 2019 permission, be marginal. Furthermore, there is nothing to suggest to me that the accommodation already permitted (and which, after all, would also provide three newly-built flats) would be deficient in any significant way. Any benefit which might arise from the provision of slightly larger living accommodation would therefore be limited; it would not outweigh the other harm which I have found.
11. I therefore conclude that the amended scheme would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies DM D2 and DM D3 of the 2014 Merton Sites and Policies Plan, and Policies D3 and D4 of the London Plan 2021. Together, and among other things, these policies seek to ensure that development relates appropriately to the scale, proportions and massing of surrounding buildings, and that alterations and extensions to existing buildings respect the form, scale and bulk of the original building, with roof forms of an appropriate size, type and form.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector