



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2022

by S Lo LLB M.SRA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/22/3303142

9 Ashmead Road, London, SE8 4DY

- 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 Mrs Sarah Wilson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/22/126436, dated 20 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a single storey extension to the rear elevation and the construction of a dormer to the rear roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site is not a listed building, but it is located within a conservation area. Therefore, I have had regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Accordingly, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the St. John's Conservation Area (the 'CA').
3. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the Council's decision notice as this more accurately and concisely describes the proposed development. This is also reflected in the response to question E on the appeal form.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Reasons

5. The application site is a two-storey mid-terrace dwelling house located on Ashmead Road. It is a good example of the typical type of Victorian residential property which may be found within the locality. Several other properties within the CA have been extended through dormer extensions.
6. The CA covers an area which encompasses Ashmead Road and several of the highways and properties around it. The significance of the CA is derived from the residential terraces which date from the Victorian era. These terraces share a common design, with detailed facades and embellishments which gives the street a generally open and attractive appearance. The application site contributes positively to the CA, notably preserving a predominantly unaltered

frontage, however, the rear aspect has already been modified with two rooflights.

7. The dormer would not be centrally located on the roof and would give the appeal site an asymmetric appearance. Within this terrace at no 3 Ashmead Road, there are two dormers located on that property which are sympathetic to one another, which is conducive to its location as a mid-terrace dwelling house. At no 11, no 19 and no 23 Ashmead Road, also within this terrace, the respective dormers at each of these properties have been constructed as centrally as possible on an end of terrace sloped roof. Therefore, there are no other comparative properties which substantially alter the character of the area, as to justify this asymmetric dormer. The plans indicate that the dormer would be positioned immediately adjacent to the neighbouring property and would not be set in by 0.3m from the party wall, which would affect the rhythm of the roofline development across the row. The windows of the dormer would also be larger than those which are located on lower elevations, therefore there would be a disruption in the hierarchy between floors. Accordingly, the proposed development would appear as a prominent and discordant feature which would be out of keeping with, and harmful to, the appearance of the property and the wider terrace.
8. The plans indicate that the single storey extension will not further expand the current dimensions of the appeal site, aside from the roof which will meet the property at a higher point. It will have a ridge height which is visibly lower than the sill of the first-floor window by over 2 brick courses. It is considered that this additional height will be minimal and would not significantly add to the visual bulk of the building. Therefore, it would be acceptable on the basis that it would be subservient and remain secondary to the host building in terms of form and scale.
9. In reaching this view, I have considered the fact that the proposed development may improve the internal layout of the property and that two rooflights already exist at the appeal site. Also, while the proposed development may not be immediately visible from Ashmead Road, this would not preclude the proposed development from being visible from other locations in the CA. Accordingly, the unsympathetic nature of the proposed development would be inconsistent with the Victorian qualities of this part of the CA. It would therefore harm the wider character and appearance of the CA as a whole, affecting the scale and rhythm of the properties in the area. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the appearance and therefore, the significance of the CA. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of this appeal.
10. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. Given that the sole issue is the dormer, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.

11. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. There is insufficient information before me which outlines the public benefits of the proposal, accordingly there are no public benefits which are sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
12. I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the St John's Conservation Area and would cause less than substantial harm to its significance as a designated asset. In the absence of any public benefits to outweigh this harm, it would be in conflict with Policies DM30, DM31 and DM36 of Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (November 2014), Core Strategy Policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy (June 2011), specifically the need for development to attain a high standard of design, respect the architectural characteristics of the original building and preserve the character of the existing setting. Additionally, the visual impact of the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the CA, contrary to the Policy HC1 Heritage, conservation and growth of the London Plan (March 2021), the Alterations and Extensions SPD (April 2019) and Part 16 of the Framework.

Conclusion

13. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweighs the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Lo

INSPECTOR