
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/22/3312809

36 Latchmere Road, London SW11 2DT

- 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 and Mrs Blott against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2021/5101, dated 8 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a three-storey rear extension and the erection of a mansard roof extension to the front of the main house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The Council refers to the Wandsworth Publication Version Local Plan (LP), which is yet to be adopted. As the policies within the LP may change prior to adoption, I attach limited weight to them for the purpose of this appeal.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development firstly, on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area; and secondly, on the living conditions of the occupiers of 38 Latchmere Road with particular regard to sense of enclosure, outlook, light and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey mid-terrace house with a single storey rear projection that lies within a predominantly residential area. I saw that several properties within the same terrace as No 36 have been externally altered and extended particularly at the rear. Consequently, there is considerable variety to the existing built form of the terrace to which No 36 belongs. The site is not within a conservation area and the appeal dwelling is not a listed building.
5. The proposal is to enlarge No 36 with ground and first-floor extensions that would project outwards from the main back wall with the rear elevation broadly aligned with that of the attached property, which is 34 Latchmere Road. A new mansard style addition with raised party walls would also be placed onto the existing and extended roof of No 36. The external materials to be used would match those of the existing building.

6. When seen from the rear of the site, there would be a 2-storey, full-width elevation with a sizeable dormer above, creating 3-storeys in all. Given its considerable size, mass and height, the proposal could not reasonably be described as subservient to the original house, nor would it avoid an over-dominant extension when seen from the rear of the site. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with Policy DMH 5 (vii) of the Wandsworth Local Plan: Development Management Policies Document (DMPD). Furthermore, very little, if any, of the main rear wall, which appears to be an original feature of the host property, would be evident with the new built form in place.
7. By significantly adding to the scale and mass of the existing dwelling, enlarging its footprint, and fundamentally altering its shape, the appeal scheme would overwhelm the traditional style and built form of the existing house. It would also mask a significant part of the original dwelling. As a result, the intrinsic character of the dwelling would be spoilt. While the proposed rear extension and mansard style roof addition would not be readily evident from public vantage points, these features would be visible from the back gardens of the properties on either side of the site. From these vantage points, the appeal scheme would draw the eye as an overly large and bulky extension even among the varied built form across the rear of the wider terrace.
8. The appellants appear to rely, to some extent, on the rear extensions of other neighbouring properties. From what I observed, the proposal would be noticeably taller and larger than the 2-storey full width rear extension at No 34. As this adjacent extension appears to have been approved some time ago, before the DMPD was adopted, the policy background also differs to that of the new development. While other properties further along the same terrace as No 36 have been extended in ways that are similar to the proposal, few background details of these have been provided. Consequently, I cannot be certain that their circumstances are the same or very similar to those of the appeal scheme.
9. Reference is also made to the Council's recent decision¹ to grant planning permission for a mansard roof extension and a 3-storey rear addition at 567 and Flat 2, 567A Battersea Park Road. However, from my inspection of the plans provided of the approved scheme, it differs in scale and design to the proposed development. Furthermore, as a corner property, the relationship of No 567 and 567A with the adjoining buildings contrasts with that of No 36. As I am unable to conclude that this example, or those within the same terrace as the appeal dwelling, is directly comparable with the appeal scheme, I therefore attach only limited weight to them in support of the appeal. In any event, each development should be assessed on its own merits, as I have done.
10. On the first main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. Accordingly, it conflicts with DMPD Policies DMS 1 and DMH 5. These policies aim to ensure that developments physically integrate with their surroundings and residential extensions are not so large as to dominate the original building. It would also fail to adhere to the guidance within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Housing* (SPD), which states that extensions should respect the form and proportions of the original house and should not dominate its appearance.

¹ Application reference 2019/0362 dated 25 March 2019

Living conditions

11. The 2-storey flank wall of the proposed rear extension and the side elevation of the mansard roof would be up to and parallel with the shared boundary with the attached property, which is 38 Latchmere Road. A ground floor window in the side return of No 38 faces the site and there is a window in its main rear elevation at both ground and first floor levels. Views from each of these windows would be dominated by the considerable expanse of new wall at reasonably close range. The main effect of the new built form would be to further enclose the outdoor space just to the rear of No 38. It would also increase the 'tunnel effect' in views from the rear-facing windows of No 38 given the presence of buildings on either side of them. This arrangement would unduly heighten a sense of enclosure for the occupiers of No 38. The height, rearward projection and proximity of the new flank wall with the side elevation of the mansard above would also cause an overly dominant aspect for the occupiers of No 38.
12. Because the windows at the rear of No 38 would be just to the southeast of the proposed extension, the loss of natural light to the rooms served by them would be limited. Furthermore, the use of obscure glazing in each of the new side windows would overcome overlooking problems towards the outdoor space at the back of No 38. While each of these proposed windows would be noticeable from the rear of this attached property, the openings would be modest in size and narrow. On balance, I doubt that the presence of these new windows would be so imposing as to increase a sense of being overlooked.
13. Nevertheless, I conclude on the second main issue that the living conditions of the occupiers of No 38 would be materially harmed as a result of the proposed development. As such, it is contrary to DMPD Policy DMS 1 and the Council's SPD insofar they aim to safeguard residential amenity.

Other matters

14. Once complete, the enlarged dwelling would provide additional living accommodation that would improve the living conditions of the appellants. However, this consideration does not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified in relation to the main issues.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
16. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised including the absence of objections from others, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR