



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2023

By Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/22/3312266

21 Caterham Road, Lewisham, London SE13 5AP

- 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 Andrew Mort against the decision of The London Borough of Lewisham Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/128203, dated 26 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a rear dormer roof extension, insertion of one rooflight to the front roof slope and one rooflight to the rear roof slope, and changes to the ground floor rear French doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the description of development varies between documents submitted for the purpose of this appeal, I have used the one from the Council's decision notice as this most accurately and concisely describes the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property, local area, and that of the Belmont Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is a two storey modestly proportioned early 20th century semi-detached house. Caterham Road is close to Lewisham High Street but is in a predominantly residential area, which is made up of streets of similar semi-detached and terraced properties. The part of the CA within which the appeal site sits is recognised for its terraced and semi-detached two storey villas of largely similar plan. These exhibit a great variety of design, with Old English, Arts and Crafts, Neo-Georgian, and Queen Anne influences all apparent. In this regard, the appeal dwelling makes a contribution to the significance of the CA.
5. The CA is a heritage asset to which I have a statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. I must pay

- special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
6. The appeal dwelling has a part gabled front with a side hipped roof form. The proposed zinc clad rear dormer extension would sit within the rear roof slope and would be set in from the ridge and roof edges. Whilst the proposal would be greater in size than that recommended in the Councils Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD), it would appear to be within the proportionate size criteria set out within the SPD for dormer extensions with a Conservation Area.
 7. However, the design guidance given in the SPD is advice that should be considered along with the individual circumstances. In this case, the appeal dwelling, and its semi-detached pair have taller than usual hipped roof forms. This results in a narrow section of rear roof slope below the roof ridge. This is a common roof form to the houses in this part of the CA.
 8. Due to its width, projection and hipped roof form the proposed dormer extension would appear as a bulky addition to the limited size and scale of the appeal dwelling's rear roof slope. Further, the proposed sliding doors with Juliet balcony would be significantly larger than the first floor window beneath and would more closely reflect the scale of the rear ground floor doors, which provide access from the house to the garden. As such the proposed sliding doors would appear as a disproportionately large opening that would not reflect the hierarchy of the existing fenestration of the appeal dwelling.
 9. For these reasons the proposed dormer extension would appear as an incongruous and unduly prominent addition to the appeal dwelling, which would be a visually dominating presence on the roof of the existing house and the semi-detached pair of which it forms part. This effect would be very apparent in views from the rear of neighbouring properties and their gardens that are also in the CA.
 10. Although it is apparent from my site visit that rear dormer extensions are common within the local area and the wider CA, many of these appear to be of some age. The size and design of these are also not directly similar to the proposal and I have, therefore, given these little weight in my considerations.
 11. The 2 rooflights proposed would be positioned with one each in the front and side roof slopes. From my site visit it was clear that where there are occasional rooflights in the roof slopes of other similar residential properties in the local area. Where these roof lights were visible to me on my site visit, it was apparent that they detract from the uniformity of the generally uninterrupted roofscape of properties within the CA.
 12. Similarly, the proposed roof lights would not only impact on the roof of the appeal property but would also interrupt the visual coherence roof of the semi-detached pair of which the appeal dwelling forms part, and the roofscape of the wider area. This would introduce incongruous elements that would detract from the general coherence of the existing roofscape and local street scene, which forms part of the significance of the CA.
 13. Whilst I acknowledge the appellant's view that the proposal would allow for the type of space that they envisage would provide improved living conditions for

their family, this would represent a predominantly private rather than public benefit, to which I can only give moderate weight in my considerations.

Other Matters

14. Whilst the appellant has raised concerns with regard to the quality of communication and written material received from the Council, these are not matters for me to consider as part of this appeal. Other procedures are set up to deal with complaints of this nature.
15. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the appeal property and that of the local area. This would be contrary to policy 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy (2021) (the CS), policy DM30 and DM31 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (2014) (the LP), policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) (the London Plan) and section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework), which collectively seek to ensure that developments are of a high standard of design and integrate with the local area.
16. Further, the proposal, for the reasons given would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA. The proposed development would not, therefore, be in accordance with policy 16 of the CS, policy DM36 of the LP, policy HC1 of the London Plan and section 16 of the Framework, which collectively seek to ensure that development has due regard to the importance of preserving or enhancing heritage assets and conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation.

Conclusion

17. As no public benefits have been identified that would outweigh the harm that I have identified above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR