



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 April 2023

by S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/23/3317131
87 Manor Way, London SE3 9XG

- 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 Richard Gomer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 22/2939/HD, dated 2 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "Extension to the rear and front of the property, roof configuration and internal layout alterations".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - (i) the effects of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host property and whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blackheath Park Conservation Area, and
 - (ii) the effects of the proposals on the living conditions of the occupiers of 89 Manor Way, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey detached dwelling. It forms part of a group of early 20th century houses built in an informal Arts and Crafts style featuring hipped roofs, bay windows, tile hanging, render and brick. Whilst the houses differ greatly in terms of their individual design, the use of common elements and materials gives the group a strong level of coherence. This, together with the ample setbacks from the road, creates a high-quality and pleasant residential environment that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Blackheath Park Conservation Area (BPCA).
4. The appeal property has a T-shaped plan form with a protruding central element at the front and the main part of the house recessed behind this, and behind the building line of the houses to either side as well. This distinctive plan form is accentuated by the prominent double storey bay at the front that contrasts with the extensive areas of roof to either side, the eaves of which

sweep down to the top of ground floor level. I note that the frontage of the property has been somewhat harmed by the addition of dormers in the side slopes of the protruding element and the construction of a flat-roofed garage to the side. However, the distinctiveness of the property's form, which I note is mirrored by some nearby houses in Manor Way and nearby Brooklands Park, greatly adds to the character of the group of houses and the BPCA as a whole. This is a matter to which I attach significant weight.

5. The proposal would include extensions to the front of the property. These would comprise bringing the recessed parts of the front elevation forward, together with the erection of a porch and the removal of the pair of dormers to either side of the forward projecting roof element. The dormers detract from the appearance of the property and their removal represents a clear enhancement. However, bringing the recessed parts of the front elevation forward would slightly dilute the distinctiveness of the property whilst the flat-roofed porch would introduce an element that would be at odds with the original Arts and Crafts aesthetic of the property and compromise the distinctive plan form further. On balance, the overall effect of the changes at the front would be negative.
6. To the rear of the property there is a single-storey addition that extends across slightly less than half the width of the rear elevation. Like the roof at the front of the house the roof to the rear is made of clay tiles and sweeps down to the top of ground floor level. Within this roof there are rows of dormer windows at first and attic levels. The rear extension and upper-level dormer additions have led to a somewhat cluttered and ungainly appearance at the rear, particularly given wide, high-level dormers are not a common feature in the immediate surroundings.
7. The proposal would to all intents and purposes involve the re-construction of the rear part of the house with a full-width, flat-roofed ground floor element, protruding beyond a vertical first floor elevation above which the roof would be expanded, and a large area of flat roof formed at ridge level. Within the rear roof slope, a wide lead-clad dormer would be formed. What remains of the Arts and Crafts aesthetic and the distinctiveness of the house at the rear would be lost. I recognise that the vertical first floor elevation and hipped roof would be broadly compatible with the houses to either side. However, the large dormer and overall bulk of the roof would not. In the context of the neighbouring houses the additions to the rear would be overly prominent and out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
8. I therefore conclude that, due to their siting, scale, bulk, massing and design the proposals would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host property and would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the BPCA. The harm in this respect would be substantial. Consequently, the proposals fail to comply with Policies DH1, DH3, DH(a) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan, Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (RGLP) which, amongst other matters, seek development that pays special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. There is also conflict with the aims of Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), the Council's Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2018) (SPD) and the Blackheath Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

9. The appellant has referred to multiple planning permissions for extensions to properties in the area. Many of these pre-date the current development plan and the current Framework, which stipulates that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. In addition, none of the permissions relate to properties that are directly comparable to the appeal property. As each planning application and appeal needs to be considered on its individual merits, I attribute limited weight to information presented in this regard.
10. There are houses nearby that are very similar in appearance and form to the appeal property. I am conscious therefore that allowing this appeal could lead to pressure to substantially re-model these houses therefore diluting their distinctiveness, leading to harm to the character and appearance of the BPCA.

Living Conditions

11. The proposal would result in the formation of a tall brick wall immediately next to the boundary shared with 89 Manor Way. This, together with the set back first floor addition, would result in an increased sense of enclosure in the part of the rear garden of No. 89 closest to the appeal site together with some loss of outlook from ground floor windows in this area. However, these effects would be localised. No. 89 benefits from a relatively wide rear elevation and open aspect to the rear.
12. For these reasons I am satisfied that the reduction in outlook from No. 89 would not be of a degree that would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No. 89. As such the proposals accord with RGLP Policy DH(b) and the aims of the SPD, both of which seek to protect the amenity of adjacent occupiers.

Other Matters

13. I note that a site visit was not undertaken by the case officer and the Conservation Officer did not comment on the application. These essentially procedural matters have limited bearing on the merits of the proposal and therefore I accord them limited weight.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out under the first main issue, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole

INSPECTOR