



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2023

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/22/3311163

79A Springbank Road, Hither Green, Lewisham, London SE13 6SS

- 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 C Jones (Maurice Laurent Limited) against the decision of London Borough of Lewisham.
- The application Ref DC/22/127852, dated 4 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2022.
- The development proposed is a dormer loft extension in the rear roof slope.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a dormer loft extension in the rear roof slope at 79A Springbank Road, Hither Green, Lewisham, London SE13 6SS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/22/127852, dated 4 August 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 14185-100-OS; 14185-100-E01; 14185-100-E02; 14185-100-P01; 14185-100-P02; 14185-200-E01; 14185-200-P01; 14185-300-E01; 14185-300-E02; 14185-300-P01; 14185-300-P02.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a three-storey building with commercial premises on the ground floor and two residential floors above in use as a small house in multiple occupation. The building forms part of a long, straight terrace which backs onto a railway line.
4. The proposed rear dormer window would occupy the main rear roof slope of the building but would not extend over the rear outrigger. There are a limited number of rear dormers along the length of the terrace, but the roofscape is not visible from public vantage points on Springfield Road itself. To the rear, there are fleeting glimpses of the roofline from passing trains, though these are also filtered by mature trees standing between the rear gardens of the terrace and the railway land beyond. I saw on site that there are some views towards the roof of the appeal building from the forecourt of the backland dwellings at Nos 89A and 89B, though these are at oblique, upward angles taking in a limited extent of the roofscape.

5. Within this context, the proposed rear dormer would have very limited effect on the overall contribution of the host building to the wider streetscape. It would not significantly alter the overall scale or form of the terrace, particularly as this could only be appreciated in fleeting glimpses through trees from passing trains. The dormer would not extend beyond the main rear wall of the building and thus the additional bulk would not be dominant in the angled views from the neighbouring occupants at Nos 89A and 89B.
6. The Council points to the design of the dormer conflicting with its Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (April 2019) as the front and sides of the dormer would not be set back 0.3m from the edges of the roof slope. However, given the limited visibility of the roofline, the absence of these setbacks would not be obvious and the dormer would not be demonstrably more harmful in its form or appearance compared to a design that complied with the SPD parameters. The dormer would be set down from the main ridge line, which would help mitigate its overall scale and visual impact, particularly in preventing it from being visible from the front on Springbank Road.
7. The Council also points to the fenestration of the dormer not reflecting that of the lower floors. I accept that the arrangement of windows lacks order but given the very limited potential for the rear elevation to be viewed as a whole from any vantage point, I am satisfied that the proposed fenestration would not cause material harm to the overall quality of the surroundings.
8. Therefore, whilst not fully according with the standards of the Council's SPD, I find that the proposed extension would not harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, I find no conflict with Policy 15 of the Lewisham Core Strategy (June 2011) or Policies DM30 and DM31 of the Development Management Local Plan (November 2014), which together require development to achieve high quality design that positively responds to local distinctiveness; that respects and/or complements the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, and detailing of the original buildings.

Other Matters

9. The Council did not find harm in respect of the proposed rooflights to the front roof slope. I have seen no evidence to lead me to a different view. I am also satisfied that the proposal, given its position relative to the nearest windows and external spaces, would not lead to material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to a condition setting out the approved plans, to provide certainty.

K Savage

INSPECTOR