



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2023

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/23/3320093

68 Bargery Road, Catford, London, SE6 2LW

- 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 & Mrs Wilmott against the decision of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref. DC/22/127376, dated 28 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is construction of a wraparound single storey side and rear extension, and rear roof extension, together with the installation of two rooflights in the front roof slope, a window in the front gable end and alteration and extension of the existing garage outbuilding at the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have adopted the description of development on the decision notice as this more accurately describes the appeal proposal.
3. Whilst the Council's decision notice includes two reasons for refusal both relate to the impact of certain elements of the appeal proposal on the host property and designated conservation area. As such, they raise a similar issue in relation to the alleged impact of the development on the character and appearance on the host and conservation area. I have, therefore, dealt with them under one main issue.
4. The Council have not raised any objection to the proposed wraparound single storey side and rear extension or to the proposed alteration and extension of the existing outbuilding at the rear. There is no evidence before me that would lead me to reach a different finding and based also on my observations on site I concur with the Council in this respect. I have proceeded to determine the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the conservation area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site lies within the Culverley Green Conservation Area (CGCA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act

1990 requires, therefore, that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Similar advice is to be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (Framework), as well as in policy HC1 of The London Plan 2021 (March 2021) (TLP), Core Policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy (June 2011) (LCS), and DM Policies 30 and 36 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (November 2014) (LDMP).

7. The Council have provided a map of the CGCA, but I have not been given a copy of the Culverley Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal, albeit the latter is referred to in the Council's Delegated Report. I have, therefore, based my assessment of the conservation area's special interest on the Delegated Report, the Heritage Statement as well as my observations on site. As the map of the CGCA infers and as I observed on my site visit, Bargery Road, which includes the appeal site, forms part of the heart of this conservation area. As with the streets that surround it, the properties in Bargery Road form part of an attractive Edwardian suburb. The character of the suburb is that of semi-detached Villas of similar size and form, with consistent building lines and spacing. Properties are set back from the road, some behind walled front gardens along a grid like road pattern with tree lined streets and substantial rear gardens.
8. The Villas in Bargery Road are predominantly 2 ½ storeys with each pair of semis having twin projecting gables and symmetrical doors and window openings, with a simple pallet of materials, mostly brick with decorative borders to the windows and doors. There is a limited amount of poor quality modern infill development or redevelopment within the area and most properties retain a large number of their original architectural and historic features and detailing.
9. All of the above contributes towards Bargery Road's special interest and the contribution it makes to the CGCA, as a whole.
10. Within this context the appeal property retains a number of its original architectural and historic features and detailing. However, the original roof covering and windows have been replaced and the recessed front entrance filled in with glazed doors. The front garden wall has also been removed to accommodate off-street parking. I understand that an Article 4 Direction covers the whole of the CGCA, but again I have not been provided with a copy of this and have assumed that it seeks to control permitted development works that could further detract from the special interest of the area.
11. The Council's objections relate to a number of elements, which I will deal with in turn. In relation to the proposed window opening within the front facing gable, this feature would, in my view, harm the distinctive character of the host and the symmetry it exhibits with the other half of the semi, 66 Bargery Road. As I confirmed earlier that symmetry is an important and positive feature of these Villas and the contribution they make to the special interest of the CGCA. As I also observed on site, none of the three pairs of semis on this part of the road, including the appeal site, have similar gable windows and it is not an established feature of the sites immediate neighbours and streetscene.
12. The Appellant has referred to examples of gable windows within the road and elsewhere, but none of these, even the gable window to 63 Bargery Road (No.63) diagonally opposite the appeal site, form part of the host property's

immediate context. As I confirmed above, even with the example of No.63 this feature is not a prevailing characteristic of this part of the road. In addition, whilst reference has been made to relevant planning permissions, including that for No.63, I have not been provided with any detailed background to these approvals or the individual circumstances that led to those permissions being granted in the context of the conservation area designation. It is not possible for me, therefore, to reach any findings as to whether they are in any way comparable or relevant to the appeal proposal.

13. Turning to the proposed rooflights, two conservation style rooflights are shown on the front roofslope to the host property. The rooflights would be flush with the roof, but they do not align with the existing windows below and are not sited within the middle third of the roof, but close to the gable end. Combined with the new gable window, the new rooflights would result in prominent and obtrusive features on the front elevation to the host property. I accept that there are examples of approvals for rooflights elsewhere in Bargery Road, but these are limited in number and are not a prevailing characteristic of neighbouring roof slopes or this section of road. Moreover, I have again not been provided with any details of the planning background to these approvals and I am unable, therefore, to reach a finding on whether they are relevant or comparable to the appeal proposal.
14. The Alterations & Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (April 2019) (SPD) and DM Policy 31 of the LDMP require roof alterations to incorporate a sensitive design with matching or complementary materials. Rooflights on the front roofslope of houses in conservation areas will only be permitted where they are well designed, centrally sited away from gables and verges, aligned with the existing windows below, are of conservation grade and where similar rooflights have been established as an acceptable and prevailing characteristic of front roof slopes. For the reasons given above, the proposed rooflights would conflict with the majority of this guidance and would thus result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the CGCA. As such, they would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CGCA.
15. With regard to the proposed rear roof extension, section 5.7 of the SPD does not prohibit dormers on the rear elevations of houses within conservation areas, but does require them to be modest in size, sited clear of the edges, eaves and ridge, subordinate in appearance, align with the windows below and not exceed two thirds of the width of the roof. Section 5.8 of the SPD, on rear roof extensions, continues by stating that within conservation areas this form of development will only be considered where the Applicant can demonstrate exceptional design quality, high quality materials and a location that is set in significantly from the eaves, ridge and sides to the existing roof. Section 5.11, on 'L' shaped roof extensions, which is how the Council describe this aspect of the appeal proposal, states that this form of extension is generally considered to be too harmful to existing roof structures as it does not respect the original roof form. As such, only in exceptional circumstances will they be acceptable, for example, where they are common within the immediate context.
16. Within the above context, the proposed roof extension, which is partly on the main rear roofslope and partly on the roof to the rear outrigger, appears on plan to be in the form of a 'T' shape. Even so, the proposed extension has an unconventional form, shape and design, whose overall scale, bulk, height and width would, in my view, be excessive in this location and would result in an

inappropriate and unsympathetic addition to the host. It would not appear to result in sufficient separation from the eaves, ridge and sides to the original roof and would neither be subservient nor proportional to the original roof form. The new windows within the extension would also not align with those below. Whilst I accept that the proposal is at the rear, as I observed on site views of the rear of the appeal site are available from public vantage points specifically on Penerley Road, to the west of the appeal site.

17. Furthermore, my attention has not been drawn to any similar roof extensions within the immediate context of the host property and this form of extension does not appear to be common to this section of the road. Overall, the proposed extension would be harmful to the existing roof structure, it would not respect the original roof form and would dominate the rear elevation of the host property. Moreover, the proposal is not, in my view, of the exceptional design quality or of the high quality contemporary design required to justify the acceptability of this type of roof addition within the conservation area.
18. In relation to the examples of approvals provided by the Appellant, only a few of these are in Bargery Road and none fall within the immediate context of the appeal proposal. However, again, I have not been provided with any planning background to these approvals and therefore I am not in a position to reach any findings on whether the circumstances that led to those approvals or whether the schemes (extensions) themselves are in any way comparable to or have any bearing on the determination of this appeal. Consequently, none of the examples provided affect my findings on this issue.
19. Accordingly, I find that the proposed gable window and rooflights on the front and the proposed roof extension at the rear of the host property would, for the reasons given above, result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the CGCA, and as such these proposals would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CGCA. As is required, particularly by the Framework, considerable importance and weight must be attached to the harm to this heritage asset.
20. The appeal proposal would, in my view, lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, which must be weighed against the public benefits of the development. Leaving aside any personal circumstances, there are no public benefits, delivering economic or social or environmental objectives, that would be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified to the significance of the heritage asset.
21. I find, therefore, that the proposed gable window, rooflights and roof extension would be contrary to policy HC1 of TLP, Core Policies 15 and 16 of the LCS, DM Policies 30, 31 and 36 of the LDMP, the SDP guidance and paragraphs 189, 197, 199 - 200 and 202 of the Framework.

Conclusions

22. For the reasons given above and having taken all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR