



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2023

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/23/3321976

57 Southbrook Road, Lewisham, London SE12 8LJ

- 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 & Ms R & R Williamson & Barrett against the decision of the London Borough of Lewisham Council.
 - The application Ref DC/23/130125, dated 27 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a dormer extension at the rear roof slope, insertion of a rooflight to the front roof slope and installation of replacement timber sash windows to the front and rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the description of the proposed development varies between documents submitted, I have used the description from the Council's decision notice, as this is a full and accurate description that has also been used by the appellant for their statement.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and that of the local area, with reference to roofscape and Lee Manor Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is a generously proportioned two storey end of terrace Victorian House with a hipped end roof form. It is constructed from London stock-brick with contrasting red brick detailing. It is on a part of the street that is predominantly fronted by terraced and detached properties of similar design and scale.
5. The local area forms part of the part of the CA recognised for its consistently proportioned late 19th and early 20th century housing, which forms the core of the CA and provides an architectural quality and cohesive streetscape. This is exemplified by the existing character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, contributing to the significance of the CA.

6. 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.
7. The design of the proposed rear zinc clad dormer appears to seek to reflect the design guidance for such contemporary dormer extensions, as set out in of the Lewisham Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2019) (the SPD). This advice seeks to achieve a balance between contemporary design interventions and the reading of the original historic fabric and character.
8. However, whilst the proposal sits well below the roof ridge and in from the rear eaves, it would directly abut the hipped end roof form. In doing so the proposal fails to reflect the scale and form of the hipped roof of the appeal dwelling and would appear to be too large for the scale of the host roof. This would be apparent in oblique views from neighbouring private rear gardens and the public realm in Manor Lane. In these views the proposed extension would appear to be unduly prominent and to dominate the appeal dwelling's existing hipped roof profile.
9. The windows in the rear elevation of the proposed rear dormer would be different sizes, larger than the windows in the floor below and asymmetrically positioned. These windows would wrap from the vertical rear elevation to the horizontal roof plane, breaking the ridge between these two planes.
10. This would not reflect the existing traditional window layout and hierarchy of the rear elevation of the appeal dwelling, nor the design of windows in dormer extensions in the local area. This would result in an apparent disparity between the appearance of the proposal and the established character and of the appeal dwelling and local area, in which it would sit in stark contrast.
11. For these reasons the proposed rear dormer extension would appear as an overly large, dominant, unduly prominent and incongruous addition, which would fail to appear as subordinate to the appeal dwelling. The proposal would not, therefore, maintain the role the roofscape of the appeal dwelling plays in the character and appearance of the local area and its contribution to the significance of the CA. As such, the proposal would fail to accord with design guidance given in section 5.8 of the SPD.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to the other roof level extensions in the local area. These vary significantly in form, design and materials, and from my site visit it was apparent that the majority of these were to the roofs of mid-terrace houses, including that at 67 Micheldever Road, which is readily visible from Manor Lane. I note from my site visit that the design of the zinc clad dormer extension on the hipped roof of 64 Manor lane, unlike the proposal, follows the hipped roof form into which it is located.
13. Whilst these demonstrate that extensions of contemporary design can be successfully integrated into properties in the CA, I do not find that they constitute direct exemplars or precedents with regard to the proposed dormer extension. These would have been considered on their own individual merits and I have done likewise in my consideration of the proposal. I have, therefore afforded these little weight in my considerations.

14. The proposed rooflight in the front roof slope is modest in size, reflecting the type of rooflights evident in the local area. This aspect of the proposal would not, therefore result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling or to the significance of the CA.
15. The proposed timber sash windows would replace what appear to be existing uPVC windows, which fail to reflect the Victorian character and appearance of the appeal dwelling. The proposed windows would better reflect this character and appearance and would result in a significant enhancement in this regard to the appeal dwelling, thereby improving its contribution to the significance of the CA.
16. For the reasons given above, the proposal, due to the effect of the proposed dormer extension would, on balance, result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and would as a whole fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. This would be in conflict with policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy (2021), policies DM30, DM31 and DM36 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (2014), Policy D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework). These collectively seek to ensure that development is of high quality design, having due regard to the importance of preserving or enhancing heritage assets.
17. Although I find that on balance the harm to the CA that I have identified would be less than substantial, in accordance with the Framework, great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Whilst the proposal would result in a larger property with improved living conditions for its occupiers, these are substantially private benefits. I must give considerable importance and weight to the effect on the significance of the CA and substantial weight to the effects on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling that I have identified. I consider that these benefits do not outweigh this harm.

Conclusion

18. The appeal is dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR