



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 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/A5840/D/23/3315591

19 Grovelands Close, Southwark, London SE5 8JN

- 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 Corrado against the decision of the London Borough of Southwark Council.
 - The application Ref 22/AP/3475, dated 5 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion by increasing the ridge by 941mm to sit below the neighbour with a rear set in Dormer, and 3 Velux rooflights to the front roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - The living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers,
 - The character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area; and
 - The living conditions of the occupiers of the appeal dwelling.

Reasons

Living Conditions (Neighbouring residential occupiers)

3. The appeal dwelling is a small two storey attached house with a small private front garden. The rear of the appeal dwelling has a single narrow slot type window to its first floor. To the rear is a small common garden area shared with neighbouring small houses that make up the small and densely developed estate of which the appeal dwelling forms part.
4. The proposed loft extension includes rooflights to the front roof slope and a dormer extension with 3 windows to the rear. These windows would provide for extensive views out over the rear common garden area and the houses to the rear of the appeal dwelling that also front this common garden area.
5. Given the density of the small estate of which the appeal dwelling forms part and the concomitant close proximity of dwellings, it would appear that houses

on the estate and their layout has been carefully designed to minimise opportunities for overlooking. Some houses, including the appeal dwelling, have only narrow slot windows at first floor level in rear and side elevations where these face towards the fronts of other neighbouring houses.

6. The roof ridge of the proposed loft extension and rear dormer would be below the roof level of the neighbouring attached dwelling at 18 Grovelands Close. This neighbouring dwelling is, however, set higher up the hill that forms the local topography. The height of the proposed rear dormer would cause the appeal dwelling to appear to be 3 storeys, this additional bulk and its massing would result in an overbearing sense of enclosure to the small common garden area and densely developed houses at the rear of the appeal dwelling.
7. The windows in the rear of the proposed dormer extension would allow for a significant degree of overlooking, from an elevated vantage point, of houses to the rear. Those affected sit at a 90 degree angle to the appeal dwelling and also face onto the common garden area. Given the close proximity of the dwellings at 20, 21 and 22 Grovelands Close (No. 20, 21 and 22), this would allow for intrusive overlooking of the front rooms and living spaces of these dwellings.
8. This would result in a loss of privacy to their occupiers. In combination with the enclosing effect I have identified, this would be experienced as oppressive and would result in substantial harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of these houses.

Character and Appearance

9. The scale, bulk and massing of the proposed loft extension and rear dormer would result in it appearing too large for the small two storey appeal dwelling and it would have a dominating effect on its appearance. This would stand in contrast to the small scale of the existing dwelling and the other houses that make up the estate.
10. In this context the proposal would result in the appeal dwelling appearing incongruous in relation to its neighbours. As such, the proposal would result in substantial harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area.

Living Conditions (Occupiers of the appeal dwelling)

11. The proposal would add to the living space of the existing small single bedroom house, providing an ensuite office space. There is the potential for this to be used as an additional bedroom.
12. Whilst the proposal has a small front garden, there is also the common garden space to the rear. As such, the extent of amenity space available to the occupiers of the appeal dwelling would be sufficient for a small single family dwelling that is extended as proposed.
13. As such, I find that the proposal would not result in poor quality accommodation for current or future occupiers. The proposal would not, therefore, result in any significant harm to their living conditions. Lack of harm in this context is, however, a neutral factor in my considerations.

14. For the reasons given above, the proposal would result in substantial harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers and to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area. This would fail to accord with policies P13, P14, P15, P18 and P56 of the Southwark Plan 2019-2036 (2022), policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) and paragraph 130 of the National planning Policy Framework (2021). These collectively seek developments, including extensions, that are of high quality design, take site context into consideration and integrate with their local area, and protect the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers.
15. Whilst the council found the proposal to be in conflict with Policy D4 of the London Plan (2021). This policy relates to the design management policies and practices by London Planning Authorities and not directly to individual planning proposals.
16. The proposal would lead to a larger dwelling, providing more living space for its occupiers, these are primarily private benefits and no public benefits have been identified that would outweigh the harm to character and appearance and living conditions that I have identified.

Conclusion

17. The appeal is dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR