



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2023

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/23/3326926

42 Lewisham Park, Hither Green, Lewisham, London SE13 6QZ

- 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 Mrs Danielle Mary Andrea Toyer against the decision of The London Borough of Lewisham Council.
 - The application Ref DC/23/130774, dated 15 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2023.
 - The development is insulated render to the side and rear of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. This appeal relates to an application for planning permission for development that has been implemented, therefore the application is retrospective, and I have determined the scheme accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the local area, with reference to the Lewisham Park Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

4. Lewisham Park is characterised by its large late 19th Century and early 20th Century semi-detached brick built houses, facing onto the park. Both the houses and their park setting contribute to the significance of the CA, the character and appearance of which is defined by the coherent townscape of closely spaced houses on a curving street and the spaciousness of the park setting.
5. The Conservation Area 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.
6. The Lewisham Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2019) (the CA Appraisal) recognises the appeal dwelling as a positive contributor to the significance of the CA and as a Non-designated Heritage Asset (NDHA).

Accordingly, I have considered the effect of the proposal in line with paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (the Framework).

7. The appeal dwelling is a two storey brick built semi-detached house, with an attic floor in a roughcast front feature gable. The Front elevation is red brick with yellow London stock brick used for the flank. It sits in a run of similar houses surrounding the east side of the park. Although there are some variations in their original architectural expression and appear to be minor later alterations, they present a coherent street frontage to the park.
8. Whilst there are some areas of painted brickwork on flank walls of houses in this part of the CA, this appears to be more limited to areas on the ground floor. Areas of render are more limited and are mainly part of the original architectural expression of the front elevations. The render applied to the flank elevation of the appeal dwelling, as an insulating solution, is approximately 100mm thick and has been applied to the full height of the flank wall above the level of the side lean-to extension. This has been done using two colours of render, with yellow render used for the front most third of the flank wall and white render of the remainder.
9. In an attempt to integrate the additional depth of render into the existing architectural expression, the quoin brick detailing on the corner of the front elevation with the flank has been widened through the addition of matching red brick slips. I agree with the Council and the appellant that the brick slip used for the widened quoin is a good match to the existing brick. However, I find that the additional depth of the render is noticeable in the flank window reveals and in the width of the corner quoin of the appeal dwelling. This depth on the corner quoin detail results in it standing in contrast with the original quoin detail on the flank corner of its semi-detached pair, as well as with the same quoin detail on the other Edwardian houses that define the streetscape of this part of the CA.
10. Guidance for management of the CA that forms part of the CA Appraisal notes the distinction between areas of unpainted brick and other areas of painted roughcast, and that painting replaces the natural tonal variation of the brickwork with a single colour and reduces the sensual texture of the raw brickwork to a smooth, even surface. I find that the render applied to the flank wall results in the same result as painting in that that natural brick tones are lost, along with brick texture.
11. I agree with the Council and the appellant that the render to the rear of the appeal dwelling results in no harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling or that of the CA. However, I find that the render applied to the flank elevation results in the loss of original and historic architectural expression and detailing and causes the flank wall to appear as an unduly prominent feature. The appeal dwelling, therefore, appears as incongruous in relation to its semidetached pair, as well as the other houses that make up the street frontage facing the park, detracting from their cohesion as a group. As such, the development does not reflect the significance of the appeal dwelling as an NDHA nor the significance of the CA.
12. The application of the render to the flank does not accord with guidance for such development in the Lewisham Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2019). I do not agree with the appellant that the application of render in this instance is not development and find that it falls

within a type of development that is restricted by the direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the GPDO). This restricts the permitted development for such alterations within the CA where it can be seen from the public realm.

13. I find, therefore, that the development is in conflict with Policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy (2011), 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 (2023). These collectively seek to ensure that development is of high quality design, a key aspect of sustainable development, and have due regard to the importance of preserving or enhancing heritage assets.
14. The appellant is clear that their reason for applying the render is for thermal and fuel efficiency. I do not agree with the council that insufficient information has been provided by the appellant in this regard as I have no doubt that the installation achieves the thermal benefits, which is partly private, in terms of comfort and long term energy cost, and public, in terms of reducing CO2 emissions. However, the application of render to the external surfaces of a house is not the only way that such benefits can be achieved and the public benefits in this instance are limited. Further, the breathability of the render used is not relevant to the visual harm identified.

Conclusion

15. Although I find the harm to the Conservation Area is less than substantial, in accordance with the Framework, great weight should be given to its conservation as a heritage asset. In addition, I have given substantial weight to the effects on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and its significance as an NDHA. As the public benefits of the development do not outweigh the harm I have identified, the development conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and with the heritage aims of the Framework.
16. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR