

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2023

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/23/3327068

6 Skeena Hill, London SW18 5PL

- 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 David Romani against the decision of Wandsworth Council.
 - The application Ref 2023/1871, dated 15 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is alterations including erection of side roof extension to main hipped roof and rear dormer.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations including erection of side roof extension to main hipped roof and rear dormer at 6 Skeena Hill, London SW18 5PL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2023/1871, dated 15 May 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1139: P31, P32, & P33.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached house with its frontage running across the whole width of the rectangular plot excepting a shared pathway. It lies in an attractive area of primarily semi-detached homes from the 1920s and 1930s. The scale of the homes is generally similar, front elevations vary in their modelling and a number of extensions, often side dormers, are evident. The locality is of established residential character and pleasing suburban appearance. The proposal is as described above.
 4. The site lies within the Southerland Grove Conservation Area. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a
-

Conservation Area. Policy LP3 of the Wandsworth Local Plan (July 2023) (LP) reflects the importance placed on Conservation Areas.

5. With a wish to protect the immediate and wider context the Council is concerned that the planned work would be of inappropriate scale and design, create imbalance on the semi-detached pair, and harmfully infill a space to create a terracing effect.
6. I entirely appreciate the Council's wish to tightly control side and upper extensions along this attractive road. Both principal parties cite extension examples which are either deemed by them to be successful or not in the immediate pairing or streetscene as a whole. However, these carry little weight with me, not least because in almost every instance the starting point of the original home, whether spatially or elevationally individually or as part of a pair, is different from the case before me which I must judge on its own merits.
7. In this particular instance I see no need for the Appellant to have to slavishly follow the side facing dormer style extension found on the other one in the pair. The two main reasons for this are a) I would not wish to use that dormer as a benchmark of good design and b) the pairing and symmetry is primarily read and formed by the large forward facing two storey gables on each home and not the less visually important architecture beyond these.
8. Furthermore, and unlike an example used by the Council, the two-storey vertical walling is already in place. I am not persuaded that, in this specific case, putting a hipped roof, with its degree of directional and height subservience, running away from the boundary would lose any important upper level space or fairly be termed as terracing.
9. In this context I find that this proposal *for this site* would result in a continued well-designed dwelling, not losing key symmetry and not leading to any reduction in the character or visual qualities of this street scene.
10. Having regard to the foregoing I conclude that there would not be conflict with S72(1) of the Act or LP Policy LP3; there would be preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Additionally, I conclude that the scheme would not run contrary to LP Policies LP1, LP2 and LP5. These policies, and the aims of the Housing SPD which cannot cover every eventuality in its detailed guidance, share common themes. They seek to deliver well designed extensions and alterations which respect and complement context through, amongst other matters, suitable scale, appearance, materials and subservience whilst also avoiding any canyon effect.

Conditions

11. I consider that the standard commencement condition should be applied. The Council calls for a condition relating to materials matching the existing building but this is unnecessary as materials are specified within the application. However, I agree with the Council that there should be a condition that works are to be carried out in accordance with listed, approved, plans; to provide certainty.

Overall conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed.

D Cramond
INSPECTOR