

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2023

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/D/23/3326591

5 Manor Road, Cheam, Sutton SM2 7AG

- 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 Heidi Wasif against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - The application, Ref. DM2023/00167, dated 30 January 2023 was refused by notice dated 3 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a part one part two storey front, side and rear extension with roof accommodation involving the formation of a dormer extension rear, provision of two rooflights at front and one at rear. Repositioning of front door and alterations to existing vehicle access and front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed alterations and additions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings which form part of the Burton Estate Area of Special Local Character ('the ASLC').

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit to the site and its surroundings that the appeal dwelling is the first in a line of half a dozen houses on this side of Manor Road that have the same original design. The planning history indicates that these date from the early 1970s and their appearance is essentially one of a formulaic design more often seen as part of estate developments of that period. Some of these dwellings have had subsequent extensions, but the alterations and additions have not been sufficient to disguise their original form.
 4. From information provided by the Council for this appeal, I note that the Burton Estates ASLC was designated in 2011 and that an OS based Map No. 8.29 shows it covers a large area, extending to 96ha. The supporting documentation says that '*Given the historic importance and the architectural qualities of the buildings and associated landscape of the Burton Estates, it is considered to be one of the best examples of inter-war suburbia*'.
 5. Having regard to the above, it is clear that the only relevance that the appeal dwelling and its five neighbours have to the ASLC is their inclusion as an enclave of a late C20th development within the boundaries of a much more
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extensive area. And given my observations on the limited architectural merit of this group of dwellings, I see little or no justification for the references to the ASLC and Policy 30 of the Sutton Local Plan 2018 ('the Local Plan') in the officer's report and the Notice of Refusal.

6. With that said, the report and refusal notice also refer to the Council's 'Design of Residential Extensions' SPD. Paragraph 1.2 of that document includes the statement that *'The SPD seeks to change a mindset that an extension is about maximising internal floor area, and places greater emphasis on the 'donor' or original house as being the design project, where the resulting appearance must be subordinate, proportionate and respectful of the original house'*.
7. My observation that the host dwelling is not relevant to the purposes and content of the ASLC does not preclude a necessity for alterations and additions to have regard to the SPD. However, the officer's report explains that the width of the first floor extension would at 5.2m be more than half that of the application property. The 4.1m depth first floor rear extension would have a flat roof and there would be a wrap-around segment for the proposed bathroom. The ground floor rear and side extension would have a depth of 6.5m from the rear wall of the existing dwelling and a width of 9m. The effect would be to almost double the size of the host dwelling and the roof design includes a raised parapet that would be out of keeping.
8. I acknowledge the appellant's view that there are areas of dispute with this analysis; that a similar extension was approved in 2013 and that there is an element of set-back, including the new ridge being offset from the existing roof line. However, I consider that through a combination of its excessive scale and its contrasting design in relation to the host dwelling, and a front elevation with a number of disparate elements, the development would neither be perceived as subordinate nor sit comfortably in the street scene.
9. The overall impact would be one of a contemporary addition that would draw the eye as an overly bulky and unsympathetic extension to the host dwelling. And even allowing for my reservation as to the limited extent of the existing building's positive contribution to Manor Road, I consider that as well as including a number of technical conflicts with the SPD the appeal scheme would fail to respect its principal objective in the above-mentioned paragraph 1.2.
10. I have had regard to submissions in the grounds of appeal including that the extension would be screened by existing trees and that there is a fall-back in terms of prior approvals. However, vegetative screening cannot be guaranteed in the long term and the fall-back proposals would have a lesser impact. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings. This would be contrary to Local Plan Policy 28, the guidance in SPD4 and to Government policy in Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
11. The appeal is dismissed accordingly.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR