

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2024

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/23/3333336

31 Wolfington Road, London SE27 0JF

- 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 Ms C M Southall against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application, Ref. 23/02116/FUL, dated 3 July 2023 was refused by notice dated 25 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing rear extension; the erection of a new single storey rear extension, and addition of new rear facing windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the demolition of the existing rear extension; the erection of a new single storey rear extension, and addition of new rear facing windows at 31 Wolfington Road, London SE27 in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 23/02116/FUL, dated 3 July 2023 and subject to the schedule of conditions attached herewith.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. There are two separate aspects to the proposed development: (i) the alterations and additions to the rear elevation (albeit this is technically a flank elevation because the dwelling's frontage is to Casewick Road) and (ii) the alterations to the front of the existing three storey extension granted permission by the Council in July 1999.
 4. As regards the rear, because of the orientation of the dwelling and its corner position at a junction in Wolfington Road this elevation is prominent in the street scene of Casewick Road. The appearance of this wall is not untypical of a rear or flank elevation normally hidden from public view and is of little or no aesthetic merit. This is due to the combination of the jarring effect of the disparate roof slope profile and its contrast with that of the attached No. 29; the prominence of the drainage pipes; the random nature of the window positions, and the fact that in views from Casewick Road immediately to the south, the pebbledash finish is read with the frontage facing brick of the 1999 extension. This visual disharmony between the two walls has, in itself, the effect of drawing attention to the utilitarian appearance of the rear elevation.
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5. Given this existing situation I see no objection to the design and materials proposed for the replacement windows. And although the additional window is somewhat large, this does have the benefit of bringing visual relief to the sight of the extensive area of blank wall. The flat roof extension and the slimline bi-fold windows would be consistent with the more contemporary appearance of the other alterations and in any event would be largely concealed by the fence on the boundary to the road.
6. Turning to (ii), the alterations to the extension, I can entirely understand the Council's orthodox approach of resisting the loss of the brickwork to the proposed render and the replacement of the more traditional window design with the single casement aluminium pvc finish. However, whilst the brickwork and windows of the extension attempt to match those of the original building, I consider that they fail to disguise its inherently unsympathetic design.
7. Because of its forward position the extension is dominant rather than subordinate; due to its three storey height the windows are in a lower position and much smaller, whilst the dormer is too contemporary, overly bulky with a flat roof and has excessive coverage of the roof plane. And as mentioned in paragraph 4 above, the extension reads incongruously with the rear elevation in the approach from the south in Casewick Road.
8. In these circumstances I consider that the appellant's design solution of unifying the appearance of the side and rear elevations with the wrap-around approach of replacement windows and the lime slurry render, and thereby providing a clear contrast with the original dwelling, has sufficient merit for me to allow the appeal.
9. The appeal scheme does not follow the Council's Design Guide, but the need for the occasional exception to be made is the reason why the document is guidance and not prescriptive. If my judgement is sound there will be no harm caused to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings or conflict with the objectives of Policies Q2, Q5 & Q11 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2021 and Government policy in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
10. The appeal is therefore allowed. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning. An external materials condition is required in the interests of visual amenity.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development to which this permission relates and is approved shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this Decision;
- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: OS Location Plan; Drawing Nos. A100_12_REV; A100_11_REV; A100_10_REV; A100_09_REV; A100_08_REV; A100_07_REV; A100_06_REV; A100_05_REV; A100_04_REV; A100_03_REV; A100_02_REV;
- 3) The materials, including the colour finish, to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be in accordance with details first submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.