
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 February 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20.03.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/D/23/3331856

7 Chaucer Road, Lambeth, London SE24 0NY

- 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 Gerald Williams against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application ref. 23/02024/FUL, dated 26 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 29 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is for a replacement single storey ground floor rear and side infill extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a replacement single storey ground floor rear and side infill extension at 7 Chaucer Road, Lambeth, London SE24 0NY in accordance with the terms of the application ref. 23/02024/FUL, dated 26 June 2023, and the plans submitted with it (site plan, 007.AB01, 007.AB02, 007.AB03, 007.AB04).

Preliminary Matter

2. At my site visit, I saw that the development has been completed and I note that the application has been submitted retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on character and appearance of the existing house and surrounds, including the Poets Corner Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two-storey property on Chaucer Road with a small front garden in a residential neighbourhood. It lies within a wider terrace consisting of five dwellings.
5. Being situated in the CA, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Paragraph 199 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

6. The special architectural and historic interest of the CA derives from the great variety of "pattern book" houses; copies of designs constructed by speculative builders spanning the period 1855 to the end of the century. The CA Designation Report notes that this has resulted in an eclectic variety of building styles with a wide range of decorations and various types of brick. It is this diversity which makes the area so attractive while it maintains an overall feel of integrity due to the comfortable domestic scale, the repetition of elements used in different ways and the leafy shade of the roads.
7. I acknowledge that unifying features give definition to terrace groups and add character and visual interest. The loss of such features through their alteration or incongruous replacements would adversely affect the quality of the heritage asset as a whole.
8. However, I observed at my visit that each of the five dwellings within the terrace has ground floor rear elements, and these vary in scale and appearance. The rear elevations and garden areas have very limited views from the public domain, being visible only at a distance from Effra Parade. The rear of the terrace has not been mentioned as of particular significance the CA Designation Report.
9. I have also been provided with various images to demonstrate that the appeal building previously included single storey structures at the back that spanned the full width of the plot, the infill part of which was not set back from the rear extension; these were of no architectural value. I am satisfied from the evidence before me that they were in place on site for a substantial amount of time, and accordingly their historic presence is a material consideration in the determination of the appeal.
10. Drawing these strings together, to my mind the addition as constructed would assimilate with the host dwelling and locality, without appearing dominant or out of keeping. The absence of a set back to the infill extension and the reduction in glazing, together with the installation of the canopy to the rear extension, whilst perhaps not ideal aesthetically, would not be so critical as to cause harm sufficient to withhold permission.
11. Taken in the round, I am of the view that the proposal would not be detrimental to the the character and appearance of the existing house and surrounds, including the CA. It would meet Policies Q2, Q5, Q8, Q11 and Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 and the Council's Design Guide 2023, which seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance.
12. It would also be consistent with the advice in the Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and it is desirable for new proposals to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Conditions

13. I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the Framework. The development is complete and therefore the standard time limit and plans condition are no longer necessary. I am satisfied that no conditions are required.

Conclusion

14. Having regard to the above and all other matters advanced, I allow the appeal.

C Hall

INSPECTOR