



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2023

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 April 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/23/3330218

2 Nevada Street, Greenwich SE10 9JL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr M Demircan against the decision of the Council for the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 23/2136/HD.
 - The development proposed is part two storey, part single storey rear extension, rear dormer extension, extension of existing basement and internal reconfiguration.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council in its Officer Report refers to a discrepancy between the proposed north (rear) elevation drawing and the proposed east elevation drawing with regards to the height and depth of the proposed rear dormers. It is set out in the appellant's statement that the dormers would be no more than 1.5m high and 2.6m deep. I have considered the proposal on this basis.
3. The proposed plans, sections and elevations include a garden studio at the end of the rear garden. However, the garden studio is not referred to in the description of development set out in the planning application form. It is therefore unclear whether it forms part of the application. Notwithstanding this, given the modest scale of the outbuilding, the Council have not raised any design concerns. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, I am of the same view.
4. On 19 December 2023, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been significantly amended. As a result, I have not sought further submissions. I will refer to the updated paragraph numbers where necessary in this appeal.
5. It has been brought to my attention that during the appeal process the Council has adopted the Royal Borough of Greenwich Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2023) (SPD). The SPD replaces the Council's previous guidance, Residential Extensions, Basements and Conversions Guidance SPD (2018), which is referred to in the Council's first reason for refusal. The main parties have had an opportunity to comment on the guidance in the adopted SPD and therefore neither party would be prejudiced by me determining the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

6. The main issues in this appeal are:

- the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling;
- whether the proposal would preserve and enhance the West Greenwich Conservation Area;
- whether the proposal would protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site; and
- the effect of the proposal on archaeological safeguarding.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal property is a modest 2-storey end of terrace house. It includes a centrally positioned 2-storey component that extends beyond the rear elevation referred to by the Council as an outrigger. This is a historical feature, and the attached property, No. 1 Nevada Street, has a similar component.
8. It may be that each proposed extension could individually be considered relatively modest and subservient to the host dwelling. Nonetheless, cumulatively they would wrap around and consume the existing outrigger and would add considerable bulk to the existing rear profile of the host dwelling. This would result in a visually dominant addition that would overwhelm the host dwelling. The contemporary style glazing, which would span most of the ground floor rear elevation, would appear awkward below the more solid form of the existing outrigger and would sever it from the ground. The flat roofed form of the 2-storey extension would also have an uncomfortable relationship with the pitched roof on the adjacent outrigger and would exacerbate the incongruous appearance of the proposed additions.
9. The proposed rear dormers would add further bulk to the rear of the host dwelling and would dominate the roof space. Although they would largely follow the position of existing windows, they would be set close together and close to the ridge of the roof, contrary to the guidance in the SPD.
10. In terms of materials, while a difference in the materials and form can help distinguish between the original dwelling and more recent additions, in this case, the proposed steel cladding finish for the two-storey extension and dormer windows would also exacerbate the incongruous appearance of the proposed additions. I note that the appellant is willing, in the event the appeal is allowed, for a pre-commencement condition to be imposed to confirm the specification of the facing materials. Nonetheless, changing the facing materials, even to one that matches the facing materials used on the host dwelling, would not mitigate the harm resulting from the size and form of the rear extensions and dormers. Overall, for the reasons above, the proposed rear extensions and dormers would result in significant harm to the appearance of the host dwelling, as well as its humble historical character.
11. The proposed alterations to the front of the appeal property would be modest. While I do not have full details of the new glazed doors or the reinterpretation of the existing black vertical timber doors before me, as these are aiming to

retain a similar appearance to the existing doors, I am satisfied these details could be sought and approved by condition. As could the full details of the low-profile conservation rooflights and proposed landscaping. Thus, the proposed alterations to the front of the appeal property would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling.

12. The proposed extension to the existing basement would also be reasonably modest. However, would extend beyond the footprint of the existing dwelling, which appears to go against the general guidance in the SPD. Nonetheless, the basement would not extend below the existing rear outrigger and therefore its total footprint would not be significantly larger than the footprint of the existing dwelling. Therefore, in this case, the extended basement would remain subordinate in scale and would have a similar environmental impact to an extension that remained under the footprint of the existing building. Given this, there would be no material conflict with the SPD, and as it would not include any external features, such as lightwells, it would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
13. However, the absence of any harm resulting from the front alterations or basement neither addresses nor outweighs the significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling resulting from the rear and side extensions and rear dormer windows.
14. Accordingly, the proposal, as a whole, would conflict with Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) (London Plan) and Policies DH1, DH(a) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy and Detailed Policies (2014) (Local Plan). These seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality, by among other things, enhancing and responding positively to the local context and existing character of a place. It would also be contrary to guidance set out in the SPD with regard to rear extensions and dormers.
15. Policy D10 of the London Plan relates specifically to the formulation of planning policy and not the determination of planning applications. It is therefore irrelevant to this appeal.

Heritage

16. The appeal property is located within the West Greenwich Conservation Area (WGCA) and the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site (WHS). I have therefore approached this appeal in the context of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the WGCA. The WHS is a heritage asset of the highest significance, recognised internationally to be of outstanding universal value.

Conservation Area

17. Nevada Street is an important historical street comprising a range of historical buildings, including listed and locally listed buildings. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, the significance of the WGCA, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is the architectural value of the historical buildings, including the appeal property, and how their layout and composition relates to the evolution of the area. The appeal property is neither listed or locally listed. However, it currently contributes positively to the WGCA, as it forms part of a

uniformed group of historical buildings with a close frontage to the street and clearly visible valuable architectural details.

18. I appreciate that views of the proposed rear and side extensions and rear dormers from public vantage points would be very limited. Nonetheless, there would be views from nearby properties within the WGCA, including the Greenwich University Stockwell Street Building. The visually prominent additions proposed to the rear of the host dwelling would significantly increase the bulk of the modest terrace property, as well as change its form by wrapping around the existing rear outrigger. This would erode the uniformity of the appeal property with its attached neighbour, as well as its humble and historical character and appearance. It would also result in the loss of some existing architectural details. Thus, it would harm the significance of the WGCA, albeit this harm would be localised.
19. The Council did not express in principle concerns regarding the modest alterations to the front of the appeal property. As set out above, I am satisfied these further details regarding these alterations could be sought and approved by condition. The alterations to the black vertical timber doors and any hard and soft landscaping scheme should take account of the historical role of the covered passage.
20. The basement would remain subordinate to the existing dwelling and would not include any external features that would harm the significance of the WGCA.
21. Nevertheless, for the reasons above, the proposal, as a whole, would harm the significance of the WGCA. The proposal would conflict with Policies HC1 and HC2 of the London Plan, Policy DH(h) of the Local Plan and Policy DH3 of the Local Plan in this regard. These seek to ensure that new development conserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas, by being sympathetic to their significance and appreciation within their surroundings.
22. I find that the harm to the significance of the WGCA would be less than substantial. As such paragraph 208 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, there may be some meaningful and moderate public benefit arising from improvements to the internal condition of the existing dwelling, which would allow it to be brought back into use as a family house. Nonetheless, paragraph 205 of the Framework gives great weight to the conservation of the WGCA, irrespective of whether any harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm. The moderate benefits would therefore not outweigh the harm I have identified to the WGCA.

World Heritage Site

23. The WHS is focused on the core of Maritime Greenwich, including the Old Royal Naval College, National Maritime Museum, the Royal Park and Greenwich Town Centre. Much of the surrounding area is also of significant architectural and historical importance and is covered by three conservation areas, one being the WGCA where the appeal property is located. The Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS arises largely from the ensemble of the public and private buildings and their architectural value, as well as the landscape design of the Royal Park, which preserve a remarkably high degree of authenticity.

24. The appeal property forms part of the approach to the formal buildings and park and in its current form contributes positively to the WHS for the same reasons as it contributes positively to the WGCA. I understand that one of the main threats facing the WHS is from development pressures within the town that could impact adversely on its urban grain. However, the proposal would not affect the urban grain of the area, and in the context of the WHS, it would comprise a modest amount of development with limited visibility. Therefore, despite me identifying harm to the significance of the WGCA, the effect of the proposal on the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS would be very limited, and it would not compromise the ability to appreciate this value or the authenticity and integrity of its assets.
25. Accordingly, it would protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS and would accord with Policy HC2 of the London Plan and Policy DH4 of the Local Plan in this regard. It would also accord with Policy DH3 of the Local Plan in terms of its effect on the WHS.

Archaeological safeguarding

26. As part of the appeal, the appellant has submitted an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (ADBA). This assessment does not amend the proposal, rather it seeks to address the Council's second reason for refusal regarding the effect of the proposal on archaeological safeguarding. The Council and interested parties have had an opportunity to comment on the ADBA as part of the appeal proceedings. No party would therefore be prejudiced by my consideration of the ADBA as part of the appeal.
27. From the evidence before me, including the comments of the Archaeology Advisor for the Historic England Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS), I am satisfied that, in this case, the archaeological interest of the site is very limited, and the proposal would therefore not have a detrimental impact on archaeological safeguarding. It would accord with Policy HC1 of the London Plan and Policy DH(m) of the Local Plan, which seek to minimise harm to assets of archaeological significance and preserve them in situ, where possible.
28. I note that the Council in its appeal statement consider that any archaeological implications of the proposal could be addressed by a suitably worded condition(s) and/or informative(s). Nonetheless, there is no substantive evidence or justification before me to impose such a condition and the Council have not included one in its recommended conditions. Had I been allowing the appeal; I would have gone back to the main parties to seek their views on this. However, given that I am dismissing the appeal due to it resulting in harm to the WGCA, I have not sought comments from parties on how to proceed.

Other Matters

29. The appeal property is located opposite Nos. 10, 11 and 12 Nevada Street, which are Grade II listed. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to give special regard to preserving the buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. With regards to the appeal, the significance of the buildings derives from their age, architectural value, and their contribution to the composition of the street. For the same reasons that the appeal property contributes positively to the WGCA, it contributes positively to the setting of the listed buildings.

30. Despite a high level of intervisibility between the front of the appeal property and the listed buildings, the rear and side extensions would not be readily visible and would therefore not affect the setting of the listed buildings. In terms of the proposed alterations to the front of the appeal property and the proposed basement extension, for the same reasons as set out above in relation to the WGCA, I am satisfied that any effect on the listed buildings would be very limited. Thus, the proposal, as a whole, would not harm the setting or significance of the listed buildings.
31. For similar reasons, the effect of the proposal on Nos. 4-7 Nevada Street would be limited and would not result in any harm to the significance of these locally listed buildings, which are listed for their architectural and group value.
32. The appellant has drawn my attention to examples of other nearby development that were allowed at appeal at Nos 4 and 5 Nevada Street. While I do not have the full details of the approved developments before me, it would appear that the properties themselves, although neighbours, are quite different from the appeal property, as neither has an existing 2-storey rear outrigger. Also, the approved extension at No. 5 Nevada Street is only single storey and the approved development at No. 4 Nevada Street, unlike the appeal proposal, resulted in several public benefits that outweighed any harm to the heritage assets. I therefore afford these examples limited weight in my decision. In any event, I have determined the appeal on its own planning merits.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

33. Overall, I have found that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on archaeological safeguarding and would protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. Nevertheless, it would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and localised harm to the significance of the WGCA, which is not outweighed by public benefits.
34. I must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. The significant harm resulting from the proposal would outweigh the moderate benefits arising from the improvements to the internal condition of the existing dwelling and associated with the construction of the proposal and the improved living space within the dwelling.
35. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the development plan read as a whole. Having had regard to all relevant material considerations, it has not been demonstrated that there are any of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Hannah Guest

INSPECTOR