



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2024

by J Moore BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/W/23/3324568

167 Woolstone Road, Lewisham, London SE23 2TG

- 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 C Jones of Maurice Laurent Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/130141.
 - The development was originally described as a hip to gable roof extension with 2 rear linking dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised in December 2023, after the deadline for appeal submissions. The revisions include new national policy concerning mansard roof extensions and a definition for mansard roofs in the glossary. As the planning application and appeal submissions refer to a mansard roof extension, the main parties were given an opportunity to comment on the revised Framework and I have taken account of any comments made.
3. The appeal site, 167 Woolstone Road is located within the Perry Fields Conservation Area (CA) and has been identified by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). I have therefore had regard to the statutory duties in respect of conservation areas under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act), and the provisions of the Framework regarding designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Main Issues

4. I consider the main issues in this appeal to be:
 - whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Perry Fields Conservation Area; and
 - the effect of the proposal upon the significance of the NDHA at 167 Woolstone Road.

Reasons

Character or appearance of the Perry Fields CA

5. There is no character appraisal of the Perry Fields CA before me. From the Council's evidence, the CA is a good example of a late 19th century suburban residential development from the Victorian era, largely unaltered. It is predominantly characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached residential properties, constructed in yellow London stock brick with shallow pitched hipped slate roofs, stone sills and lintels, decorative eaves, sash windows and chimney details. The significance of the CA is partly derived from its special historic character and common architectural characteristics.
6. No 167 is a two-storey semi-detached property forming two flats. It is constructed in the typical yellow brick of the CA, with a shared shallow pitched hipped roof and simple decorative detailing around its front doorway and windows. No 167 makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
7. The proposal would result in a hip to gable side extension, and a mansard roof extension incorporating two dormer windows in the rear roof slope.
8. Due to its siting, overall scale, height, width and depth, the proposed hip to gable side extension would result in an asymmetrical appearance to the semi-detached form of No 167 and its adjoining neighbour. It would appear incongruous to the roofscape of the wider CA.
9. While the proposal would not alter the overall ridge height or footprint of No 167, nor alter any thoroughfare, it would result in an altered roofscape with additional height, bulk and mass to the side of the roof. This would appear highly discordant to the consistent shallow pitched hipped roofscape of the CA, despite the use of complementary materials.
10. The rear facing element of the proposal would introduce a mansard roof form, which would be an alien feature within the rear roofscape of the CA. Due to its overall scale, height, width and depth, it would create a sense of bulk and mass along the rear roof slope, despite its setback from the flank elevation. This would therefore appear highly discordant to the original and largely unaltered roofscape of the CA.
11. For the reasons above, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the CA.
12. The appellant suggests that views of the proposal would be slender or acute, and the Council accepts that views would be limited from the public realm. I find no reason to consider otherwise. However, limited public visibility of the site has little bearing on my considerations, as I am duty bound to consider the character or appearance of the CA as a whole.
13. Section 72(1) of the Act requires when determining proposals in conservation areas that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The Framework makes clear that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

14. The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, the Framework requires that the harm must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposed development.
15. The appellant states that the proposal would significantly enhance the residential accommodation for existing and future occupiers of the property. The submitted plans indicate that the proposal would provide a further bedroom and ensuite to an existing flat. However, this would be a private benefit to the owner/occupier(s) of the existing property and not a public benefit.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Perry Fields CA and would cause less than substantial harm to its significance as a designated heritage asset. There are no public benefits that would outweigh this harm, to which I am required to attach great weight. This fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions of the Framework.
17. The proposed development conflicts with Policies 15 and 16 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011 (CS), and DM Policies 30, 31 and 36 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan 2014 (LP). Taken together these policies seek to ensure that development is of high-quality design; conserves and enhances conservation areas, taking account of their significance; and respects the form, period, architectural characteristics and detailing of original buildings.

Non-designated Heritage Asset

18. I have not been provided with details of any entry on a local list. Planning Practice Guidance¹ sets out that local planning authorities may also identify NDHAs as part of the decision-making process on planning applications.
19. The Council's evidence is that No 167 is part of a group of paired symmetrical villas with shallow pitched hipped roofs and simple plasterwork detailing around the doors and windows, creating an attractive group; and that the villas can be considered NDHAs. The appellant does not dispute the Council's consideration of No 167 as a NDHA.
20. Paragraph 209 of the Framework sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a NDHA should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
21. From the evidence before me and my own observations, the significance of No 167 stems from its architectural detailing and degree of cohesion within a group of three pairs of semi-detached villas at Nos 161-171. The symmetrical hipped roofscape and simple plasterwork detailing remains in situ across the group. Although No 171 has been rendered, this does not detract from the cohesive appearance of the built form of the group and its consistent roofscape.

¹ Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019

22. As set out in the first main issue, the hip to gable side extension would result in an asymmetrical appearance to No 167 and its semi-detached neighbour. This would also undermine the rhythmical symmetry and consistent roofscape of the three pairs of semi-detached villas at Nos 161-171.
23. The scale of this harm would be significant, given the cohesive and balanced nature of the existing roofscape of the group.
24. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the significance of the NDHA at 167 Woolstone Road. It conflicts with Policies 15 and 16 of the CS; and with DM Policies 30, 31 and 37 of the LP. Taken together these policies seek to ensure that development is of high-quality design; conserves and enhances NDHAs, taking account of their significance; and respects the form, period, architectural characteristics and detailing of original buildings.

Other Matters

25. A range of other matters have been raised by interested parties. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on the main issues, and consideration of these matters will not alter my decision, it is not necessary for me to address them directly.

Conclusion

26. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

J Moore

INSPECTOR