
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 May 2024

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3339397

66 The Heights, Charlton, London SE7 8JH

- 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 Abdul Rab against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 23/3277/HD, dated 9 October 2023, was refused by notice dated 5 December 2023.
 - The development is described as retrospective application for existing loft.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development set out above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details that the appeal scheme comprises hip to gable roof extensions, a new rear dormer with Juliette style balconies and 3 roof lights on the front roof slope of the appeal property. I have assessed the development sought on that basis.
3. The proposed development appears to be complete. It has been constructed broadly in accordance with the plans apart from the number and position of the front roof lights and the inclusion of glass inset panels to the full-length rear dormer windows. For the avoidance of doubt, I have assessed the appeal scheme as it is shown on the drawings because it was on that basis that the Council refused planning permission.

Main issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a detached dwelling that occupies a prominent corner plot within a predominantly residential area, wherein buildings vary in scale, height, and design. There are larger and taller buildings to one side and beyond the rear of the site and these occupy an elevated position in relation to No 66 due to the sloping ground. Consequently, there is some variety to the existing built form and topography within the local area. Within the street scene, No 66 is noticeably lower in height and appears smaller than neighbouring properties.

6. At the rear, the considerable width, height, and flat roof of the new dormer causes it to appear as an overly large 'box like' addition, the scale and bulk of which gives the dwelling an awkward top-heavy appearance. That the sidewalls of the dwelling have also been extended to form gable ends visually accentuates the disproportionate scale and mass given to the upper part of the dwelling. Furthermore, the new, full-length dormer windows do not line up with, nor satisfactorily relate to, the windows in the ground floor rear elevation, which are generally smaller and arranged horizontally. The cumulative effect of these changes is a cumbersome enlargement of the dwelling, the scale and design of which overwhelm the rear and, to a lesser extent, side elevations.
7. In views from various locations along The Heights, the sides of the rear dormer and the gable flank walls draw the eye as an overly large and visually dominant additions. As the only obvious example of this type of development in the street scene to which No 66 belongs, the dormer and gable ends are incongruous and obtrusive even when seen with taller and more substantial buildings on either side and among the varied built form that characterises the local area. In reaching this conclusion, I note that the submitted plans state that the external materials would match those of the existing building.
8. The Council's Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) contains advice in relation to roof level extensions. It states that such proposals should generally follow and complement the pattern and pitch of the main roof and be secondary in scale to the main roof, seeking to preserve or enhance the existing appearance in terms of height, scale, and visual interest. For the reasons given, the rear dormer fails to comply with this guidance. The SPD also notes that proposals to alter or convert a sloped hip end roof into a flat gable end on the side of the house are not supported as this would create an unbalanced, overbearing appearance to the property. The development before me is one such example.
9. The Council has recently issued a Certificate of Lawfulness (CoL) for a new rear dormer with the side walls of No 66 converted to form gable ends. Compared to the development before me, the CoL scheme is narrower, smaller and has a different window pattern. As the CoL and appeal schemes are not directly comparable, I attach limited weight to this alternative option.
10. On the main issue, I conclude that the dormer and hip to gable extensions, as proposed, materially harm the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. Accordingly, these elements of the appeal scheme conflict with Policy D3 of The London Plan, Policies DH1 and DH(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies and the Council's SPD. Together, these policies and guidance require that all developments achieve a high quality of design by requiring proposals for residential extensions to be limited to a scale and design that is appropriate to the building and locality; and for all new roof extensions to respect the scale and character of the host building, the street scene, and the local area. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) insofar as it requires development to be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the local area.
11. The Council raises no objection to the new front roof lights. From the submitted evidence, I have no reason to disagree. From my inspection of the plans, this part of the appeal scheme is not clearly severable to the rest of the

development, which is objectionable. Therefore, I have not issued a split decision that grants planning permission solely for the roof lights.

12. An interested party raises additional concern about the effect of the rear dormer on privacy. This is an important matter and I have considered all the submitted evidence. However, given my findings on the main issue, this consideration has not been critical to my decision.

Conclusion

13. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR