



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2024

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/24/3340035

53 Mervan Road, Lambeth, London SW2 1DR

- 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 Leslie Crabbe (Axis Europe) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref is 23/02795/FUL.
 - The development proposed is to remove the existing timber single glazed windows to the elevations and renew with white UPVC casements (and door to the rear) to the stipulated details.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue relevant to this appeal is the effect of the development upon the character of the area.

Reasons

3. The site contains a terraced house constructed to a traditional design. Notable architectural features include window sills, lentils and porch detailing. Furthermore, the house features a curved top to the window apertures. In consequence, the house's wooden sash windows also have a curved top. These are replicated on the shape of the wooden sash windows. These features are reflected on a significant proportion of the neighbouring buildings, which gives the vicinity a distinctive character.
4. The proposal would result in the removal of the wooden sash windows and replacement with UPVC casement ones. This would mean that a notable traditional building material would be lost from the facade on the building. Although the window apertures would be retained, the new frames would be rectangular and therefore the gently curving top to the windows would be lost.
5. By reason of this design, the window frames would be significantly thicker than the existing elegantly proportioned wooden windows that are a notable feature of the front elevation, which would render the development incongruous. This adverse effect would be compounded by the fact that the existing windows have a sash design. In contrast, the proposed windows would feature casement openings. As the proposal would be readily viewed alongside neighbouring houses that feature wooden, sash windows the effect of the appeal scheme would be particularly discordant.

6. The street features several trees. Whilst these would prevent views of the windows from vantage points in the wider surrounding area, the change in the design of the windows, the casement openings and the materials would be readily perceptible from the section of the street in front of the house, meaning that the adverse effect upon the area's character would be readily apparent and significantly adverse.
7. The proposal includes replacement windows and a door to the rear elevation. However, views of these from public areas would be very limited owing to the positioning of the site in relation to the road network. Although neighbouring private houses would be closer, any such views would be typically made over longer distances and at oblique angles. Therefore, the effect that the replacement rear elevation windows would have on the character of the surrounding area would be limited. However, this does not mitigate the previously described adverse effects.
8. My attention has been drawn to some nearby properties that feature UPVC and metal windows. I was able to view these on my site visit. I have not been provided with details of the planning circumstances of these, which means that I can only attribute them a limited amount of weight. Nonetheless, the defining character of the area is, in part, derived from the presence of consistently designed houses that retain traditional architectural features, such as wooden sash windows. Therefore, the further removal of more wooden windows would result in a detrimental effect upon the character of the area; and the presence of metal and UPVC windows elsewhere does not overcome my concerns.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development, in this regard, would conflict with the requirements of Q5, Q8 and Q11 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2021) and the Lambeth Design Guide (2023). Amongst other matters, these seek to ensure that developments sustain and reinforce local distinctiveness; are visually attractive; and have a design that responds positively to original architecture.

Other Matters

10. The proposed UPVC windows would offer some benefits in terms of maintenance, longevity, and cost effectiveness. However, it has not been demonstrated that the appeal scheme is the only one by which these benefits would be realised or that the costs associated with replacing the windows with a less harmful installation would be prohibitively expensive. Therefore, this does not outweigh the previous conclusions.
11. The new doors and windows might result in improved living conditions for the occupiers of the building. However, any such benefits are likely to be of a small-scale given that it has not been illustrated that the existing installations are preventing appropriate living conditions from being secured for the occupiers of the building in its current form. Therefore, this matter carries a limited amount of weight and does not outweigh my preceding findings.

Conclusion

12. The proposal conflicts with the Development Plan. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in

accordance with the Development Plan. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR