

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2024

by J Moore BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3341207

67 Maze Hill, Greenwich SE10 8XQ

- 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 Ms Aliza Paterson against the decision of Royal Borough of Greenwich.
- The application Ref is 23//3805/HD.
- The development was originally described as proposed loft conversion with rear and side dormer windows, floorplan redesign and all associated works.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the appeal site is in a conservation area, I have had regard to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), which requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character or appearance of the Greenwich Park Conservation Area (CA), including the effect upon the host property.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the CA, and also within the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. Maze Hill is a street which runs along the boundary of Greenwich Park, but it also includes a cul-de-sac. The appeal property is a semi-detached two storey property located on the corner of the cul-de-sac with its main elevation facing the park.
5. The site is located within the 'Maze Hill and northern and eastern fringes to Greenwich Park' sub-character area of the CA, recognised for its housing. The properties in and near the cul-de-sac do not form part of the earlier forms of housing within this part of the CA. However, they are seen as part of the evolution of housing development into the 20th century, and form part of the immediate setting of the park. Due to its corner siting, the front and side roofscape of the appeal property appears in prominent view along Maze Hill, particularly when approaching from the higher section. For these

reasons, the appeal property makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.

6. The proposed side dormer would be about 3.8m deep, 2.1m wide and 2.4m high. Due to its overall scale and siting, the side dormer would appear as a bulky addition within the existing side roofscape in prominent view along Maze Hill, despite its proposed hipped form. It would face the entrance of the cul-de-sac to Maze Hill, and thus it would appear as a front-facing dormer, which are discouraged in conservation areas as set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Urban Design Guide 2023 (SPD).
7. There is a discrepancy within the proposed plans such that the elevation and plan drawings of the rear dormer indicate different roof forms. The Council's officer report (OR) indicates it could be either a hipped roof form, or a dual pitched gable design. The OR states that this matter was brought to the attention of the applicant at pre-application stage, but not addressed within the submitted application. The appellant's submissions refer to the rear and side dormers having a pitched and monopitch roof form. Furthermore, it seems to me that there is a variance between the elevation and plan drawings in terms of the position of the rear dormer in the roof plane. I therefore cannot be certain what the roof form and siting of the rear dormer is intended to be, to the extent that I cannot be certain that it would follow and/or complement the pattern of the main roof.
8. Nonetheless, the proposed rear dormer would be about 2.6m deep and 1.7m wide and its window would align with other openings within the rear elevation. Due to its siting, it would appear in narrow angles of view from within the cul-de-sac at Maze Hill. However, given the lack of clarity to its proposed roof form, it is by no means certain that it would not appear as a dominant and/or discordant addition.
9. While a loft conversion is supported in principle, such support is not unfettered, and design is a key factor. It would assist in meeting the family's objective to increase living space, but it has not been demonstrated that the proposal is the only way to achieve this objective, even if the proposed side dormer is necessary to achieve sufficient headroom for a staircase.
10. The proposal seeks to replicate the side dormer of a previously approved scheme¹ granted in 2015 for a loft conversion at the appeal property comprising a side dormer and two rear rooflights, but not implemented. As local and national planning policy circumstances have changed since that time, this matter attracts little weight in my consideration of the appeal.
11. The appellant draws my attention to similar developments at Nos 63 and 71 Maze Hill, the latter allowed on appeal², before the adoption of the Council's SPD. The circumstances which led to the construction of the side dormers at No 63 are not before me. The examples are not on a corner plot, and therefore they are not directly comparable to the proposal before me, where the side dormer would appear in prominent view within the street scene.
12. The side dormers at No 63 only served to demonstrate the harmful effect of bulky side dormers to the roofscape. The scheme at No 71 includes a rooflight to a front facing roof slope, rather than a dormer. In any event, I

¹ Planning Permission Ref 14/3755/F

² Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/22/3303545

am not bound by previous appeal decisions, and in my judgement, the flat roof form of the rear dormer at No 71, which occupies almost the full width of the rear roofscape is not sympathetic to its host. I also saw some other front dormers in the cul-de-sac, which only served to demonstrate the harm of such additions to the character and appearance of the CA, and their host properties. Whilst there have clearly been unsympathetic alterations within the CA over time, this does not justify a proposal that would result in further harm in a prominent corner location.

13. For the above reasons, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, despite the use of matching materials.
14. The Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. It advises that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. I find the harm to be less than substantial in the context of the CA as a whole, and to the wider setting/buffer zone of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. Nevertheless, the harm is of considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, the Framework requires that the harm must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal. The only benefit would be an improvement to residential amenity for the occupiers of the proposed development, which is not a public benefit.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property. It would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Greenwich Park CA, and it 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 must attach great weight. This fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions of the Framework, which seeks to ensure that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
16. The proposed development would conflict with Policies D3, HC1 and HC2 of the London Plan 2021; Policies DH1, DH3, DH4, DH(a) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014; and the SPD. Taken together, these policies and guidance seek to ensure that development proposals respect, contribute to and enhance the local environment and character; conserve and be sympathetic to the significance of heritage assets; and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

J Moore

INSPECTOR