



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2024

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3346824

5 St Margarets Grove, Plumstead SE18 7RL

- 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 Alexander John Wiggins against the decision of The Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/0654/HD.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a single storey lower ground floor rear extension and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of a single storey lower ground floor rear extension and associated works at 5 St Margarets Grove, Plumstead SE18 7RL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/0654/HD, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2685/PL/41, 2685/PL/42 and 2685/PL/43.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the description of the proposal varies between submitted documents, I have used the description from the Council's decision notice, as this is an accurate description that has also been used by the appellant for their statement

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - The character and appearance of the host property and that of the local area, with reference to the Plumstead Common Conservation Area (the CA); and
 - The living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers, with reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal dwelling is an end of terrace two storey house with basement and living space in the loft, with a window in the front gable. There is an area well to the front and a long rear garden that slopes down away from the house. It forms part of a run of terraced properties opposite Plumstead Common, a green space designated as Metropolitan Open Land. The local area falls within the boundary of the CA, the significance of which is focused on the ancient common. The Plumstead Common Conservation Area: Character Appraisal (2010) recognises that the surrounding terraces of Victorian houses that overlook the common, including the appeal dwelling, are of townscape significance, making it desirable to protect or reinstate their traditional character.
5. In line with the duty imposed on me by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have given considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
6. The proposed lower ground floor rear extension with flat roof with roof lights, would be to the full width of the appeal dwelling. It would be approximately 2.7 metres in height at the point where it would attach to the rear wall of the appeal dwelling and would project approximately 6 metres into the rear garden.
7. It is noted that the Council have recently given consent¹ for a similar full width extension that would project approximately 2.78 metres from the existing rear wall. The proposed extension would project a further 3.22 metres into the rear garden than that of the extension previously approved. I have attached great weight to this previous consent in my considerations.
8. Whilst Principle I.3.3 of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2023) (the SPD) sets out a 3.6 metre projection for such an extension would typically be appropriate, this is design guidance that should be applied to the individual proposal and context. Given the scale of the appeal dwelling, the size of the generous garden and that the materials for the proposal would match those of the existing dwelling, the 6m projection of the proposed extension into the rear garden would not result in it appearing bulky or its projection to be excessive in this context.
9. Rather, I find that the proposal would read as a subordinate and secondary addition, proportionate in scale to the appeal dwelling and would not dominate it. This would accord with Paragraph i.21 and i.101 of the SPD, which advise that extensions should not dominate the existing building in height, bulk or area and should dominate a historic building
10. Given the rear location of the proposal, where it would not be visible in street views but only in limited views from the rear of surrounding properties, it would not diminish the contribution that the appeal dwelling, and terrace of which it forms part, make as buildings of townscape significance within the CA. For the reasons given, the proposal would, therefore, preserve the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and that of the CA.

¹ Planning Ref:23/2965/HD

Living Conditions

11. As the proposal would be to the full width of the appeal dwelling, it would align with its boundary with the adjoining property in the terrace at 6 St Margarets Grove (No.6). There is a tall garden fence between the two properties, which, at the time of my site visit, was in disrepair, with some sections missing or flat on the ground.
12. Whilst The proposed extension would extend rearward along the boundary by approximately 6 metres this is however within the context of generous garden spaces of properties in the terrace, with a tall fence between the appeal dwelling and No.6. The nearest window to the proposed extension in this neighbouring property appears to be a lower ground floor window to a kitchen area. This window is set well away from the boundary and would only afford tangential views of the proposed extension.
13. Given the scale of the rear garden at No.6 and the distance to its lower ground floor kitchen window, the proposed extension would not result in an additional degree of enclosure that would be intrusive or oppressive and would not, therefore, result in any significant loss of outlook. Rather the effect on outlook would be a visual change, which from the rear kitchen window would be slight, given the tangential views afforded. As such, I find that the garden room is in accordance with the design guidance in Paragraphs i.18 of the SPD for extensions as they relate to outlook.
14. For the reasons given above, I find that the development does not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling or the terrace of which it forms part and preserves the character and appearance of the CA, resulting in no harm to its significance. For the reasons given, the proposal would also not result in any significant harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers.
15. Therefore, the proposed development would accord with Policies DH1, DH3, DH(a) DA(b) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy (2014), Policy D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). These collectively seek development, including extensions, that is of high design quality, responds to site context and integrates with the local area, has due regard to the importance of preserving or enhancing heritage assets and does not undermine the quality of life of neighbouring residential occupiers.

Conditions

16. As well as the standard condition for the time limit on implementation of the development, in the interests of design quality, I have also attached conditions requiring compliance with approved plans and materials that match those of the existing building.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons above, the appeal is allowed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR