



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2024

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/24/3342864

10 Wood Vale, Lewisham, London SE23 3EE

- 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 and Mrs Andreas and Caroline Roos against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/134084.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing non-original single storey side and rear extensions, to be replaced with new two storey side and rear extensions and associated internal and external improvements to modernise and improve the building.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the demolition of existing non-original single storey side and rear extensions, to be replaced with new two storey side and rear extensions and associated internal and external improvements to modernise and improve the building at 10 Wood Vale, Lewisham, London SE23 3EE, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/23/134084, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos: 000 REV A; 001 REV A; 300; 301 REV A; 302; 400 REV A; 401 REV C and 402 REV A
 - 3) No development shall take place until details / samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details / samples.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 30 July 2024 the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and other changes to the planning system. Whilst a direction of travel has been outlined within the Written Ministerial Statement, which is a material consideration, the changes to the Framework can only be given limited weight at this stage, given that no final document has been published.
3. In any event, the policies that are material to this decision are not subject to any fundamental changes, and I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party. Consequently, in reaching my decision I have therefore had regard to

the Framework as published in December 2023, and any reference to paragraph numbers are to this version.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and whether it would preserve or enhance the Forest Hill Conservation Area (FHCA).

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is located on the eastern side of Wood Vale a residential neighbourhood located in the FHCA in Lewisham. Given its location in the FHCA, I am conscious of my statutory duty arising from Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
6. The Framework advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 205 of the Framework states 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. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.
7. The FHCA adjoins the boundary with the London Borough of Southwark, hence why only the eastern side of the road is within the FHCA. The significance of the FHCA is principally derived from its architectural and historic interest as a typical Victorian railway suburb. The provision of public transport essentially contributed to how the area developed, and how it now appears. The predominant character of the conservation area is residential and well-treed, with a variety of architectural styles, including Victorian and Edwardian houses.
8. Wood Vale was developed for housing in the late 19th Century, providing uniform sized plots and standardised design features with a strong rhythmic frontage facing the road. The properties on the eastern side have a similar design and provide a consistent terrace, with relatively few gaps between the buildings, thus limiting views and vistas through to the pleasant and verdant Horniman nature trail and gardens behind.
9. The appeal site sits towards the southern end of the FHCA, and whilst similar in design to the terrace properties that proceed it to the north, the property is a semi-detached unit with a single storey garage on its flank. The proposal seeks to demolish the existing garage and replace with a two-storey development to provide extended living/dining facilities at the ground floor and an additional bedroom and study at the first floor, along with alterations to the fenestration.
10. Paragraph 135 of the Framework indicates that new development should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. The proposal would provide a modern interpretation of a traditional development, through the incorporation of a hipped first floor extension and a small centrally positioned dormer window at the front. The proportions, design and materials (which can be conditioned as part of any approval), provide a subservient nature and translate well to those

of the host property and the surrounding FHCA, providing a respectful development within the sensitive historic environment.

11. During my site visit, there were other examples of side extensions, notably at Nos 10 and 12 Wood Vale. These examples are relatively inconspicuous within the existing street scene, despite their two-storey nature. The existing single storey garage at the appeal site is wider than either of these local examples, providing an existing situation of an unbalanced pair of houses. However, whilst taller than the existing treatment, the proposal would not appear out of scale with the original building or the area in general. Furthermore, given the relatively simple and respectful design, it would integrate well with the existing appearance of the host dwelling, and that of the adjoining properties, and would not appear out of keeping in that regard.
12. I am satisfied that the massing arising from the proposal would be acceptable in visual terms, not appearing visually intrusive or overly prominent within its context. The scheme provides a respectful, well-considered design response to the site, albeit with a more contemporary design and alternative fenestration at the rear.
13. I acknowledge that the proposal would enclose an existing gap between properties. However, the subservient nature of the proposal would enable a partial gap at the roof level to be retained, still allowing views of the verdant tree lined nature walk behind the development, albeit to a lesser degree. Whilst this particular design would be different to the existing development, it would nevertheless achieve an appropriate level of subordination in a manner that would be sympathetic to both the appeal site and surrounding FHCA.
14. Consequently, I would conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the house itself or the conservation area thus preserving its significance. As such, it is consistent with the relevant sections of policies 15 and 16 of the London Borough of Lewisham Core Strategy, adopted June 2011; policies 30, 31 and 36 of the Lewisham Local Development Framework: Development Management Local Plan, adopted November 2014; policy HC1 of The London Plan, adopted March 2021; and the aims and objectives of the Lewisham Local Plan: Supplementary Planning Document – Alterations and Extensions, adopted April 2019 which collectively seek a high standard of design that promotes the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, whilst also complementing the form, period, architectural characteristics, and detailing of the original buildings. The proposal would also be consistent with the Framework which amongst other things, seeks high standards of design that would conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

15. In respect to issues raised on the living conditions of local residents in the surrounding properties, I have no reason to disagree with the Council, that the proposal would not cause harm to the living conditions of existing residents in respect of matters such as outlook, privacy, noise and disturbance. Consequently, these other matters do not lead me to a different overall conclusion that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

16. I have imposed the standard time condition and a condition to ensure the development is in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of certainty. I have also imposed a condition in respect to the material specifications in order to ensure an acceptable visual effect in the interests of preserving the historic asset.

Conclusion

17. The appeal scheme would accord with the development plan, when read as a whole and the Framework. Having considered all material considerations and other relevant matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal is allowed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR