



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2024 by M Long BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3342462

26 Fulthorp Road, Blackheath, Greenwich SE3 0SG

- 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 Barry Rose against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 23/3817/HD.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion (one dormer at rear and 2 x conservation rooflight at front).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blackheath Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The Blackheath CA covers a large, predominantly residential area that is characterised by its high quality built form and the spacious, leafy avenues that were laid out in the nineteenth century as part of London's suburban growth. The site is located to the southern part of the CA which has a distinctive local character that partly derives significance from the planned layout of a group of flat blocks with much consistency in their scale and design features. The Blackheath CA Appraisal (2013) notes that these flat blocks, designed by architects Richardson & Houfe in 1954 for Greenwich Council, adopt a conservative neo-Georgian style that was requested by local residents.
5. The semi-detached appeal dwelling forms part of a row of five semi-detached pairs that have been built in a similar neo-Georgian style to the flat blocks. There is a design consistency shared across the pairs and the flat blocks, particularly in terms of their regular form, shallow pitched roofs with overhanging eaves, window proportions and their brick and string course detailing. As such, there is a cohesive visual relationship between the different buildings within the street scene. I observed that the roofscape of the pairs and flat blocks appeared unaltered and that dormers are not a common feature of this part of the CA. While there were some single-storey rear extensions, there

was an overriding sense of uniformity across the buildings. This uniformity adds to the significance of the CA.

6. Despite its modest scale and its position set in from the eaves and set down from the ridgeline, the proposed dormer would appear as a discordant addition to the otherwise uninterrupted roofscape of the respective semi-detached pair and the wider group of buildings of which it forms a part of. This would unacceptably detract from the uniformity and consistency that characterises the buildings in this locality to the detriment of the character and appearance of the CA. Even though the proposed materials of the dormer would correspond with those on the host dwelling, this would not be sufficient to assimilate this incongruous feature.
7. While there would be limited public views, the proposed dormer would be clearly visible from neighbouring properties. From these private views, the proposal would be seen to disrupt the original roof profile of the pair, detracting from the cohesive characteristics of the estate. In any event, limited public visibility does not obviate the need to preserve or enhance the CA. The proposal would also conflict with the Royal Borough of Greenwich Urban Design Guide: Supplementary Planning Document (2022) which seeks to resist ill-considered roof extensions that change the architectural character of a building.
8. My attention has been directed to a roof extension at 6 Pond Close (No 6). While it is located within the same estate area in the Blackheath CA, No 6 is located within a short terrace of bungalows and their aesthetic is not as obviously related to the neo-Georgian style of the semi-detached pairs and the flat blocks. I am also not aware of the full planning circumstances of that particular extension. In any case, this single example does not persuade me that the appeal scheme would positively reflect the overriding characteristics of the roofscape within this part of the CA, particularly given the absence of any similar interventions at roof level in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site.
9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of CAs. For the reasons given above, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blackheath CA. Due to the scale of the proposal, it would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. However, no substantive public benefits have been put forward to outweigh the harm to the CA and I apply great weight to the CAs conservation in line with Paragraph 205 of the Framework.
10. I conclude that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Blackheath CA. It would therefore conflict with the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (CS), specifically Policies DH3 (Heritage Assets) and DH(h) (Conservation Areas) which seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. It would also conflict with Policies DH1 (Design) and DH(a) (Residential Extensions) of the CS which together, seek development that takes account of the architecture of surrounding buildings and that additions including roof extensions should be limited to a scale and design appropriate to the building and locality. There would be further conflict with the requirements

of Policies HC1 (Heritage conservation and growth) and D3 (Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach) of The London Plan (2021) which seek to conserve the significance of heritage assets, to enhance local context and respond to local distinctiveness.

Other Matter

11. Paragraph 123 of the Framework sets out that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. It is acknowledged that the proposal would support the optimisation of the site through increasing living accommodation within the existing footprint of the house. Nevertheless, this would not justify the harm that has been identified under the main issue.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Long

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR