



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 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: 19th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/D/24/3347523

3 Symington Mews, Hackney, London E9 6BG

- 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 Karla Berron against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
 - The application Ref is 2023/2456.
 - The development proposed is the extension of the existing single storey 2 bedroom dwelling to form a 2 storey 3 bedroom dwelling.
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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 the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. Symington Mews is located within a close-knit residential area and is primarily characterised by modest, two-storey, terraced and semi-detached houses. The houses have a traditional design style which more closely corresponds with the terraced dwellings on Coopersale Road, which Symington Mews sits behind, than the neighbouring, brick faced blocks of flats which are located on Brooksby's Walk. 3 Symington Mews (No 3) differs from the surrounding houses in terms of its detached nature, single-storey scale and mono-pitched roof. Even so, it has a visual connection with the prevailing traditional architecture of the wider group of houses, notably in terms of its modest window fenestration, yellow brickwork and brown roof tiles. Overall, No 3 has an understated presence, and its appearance positively reflects the traditional elements of the housing in the area.
5. The large, single-paned, first-floor window to the front elevation of the extension would be at odds with the regular pattern and proportions of other windows on this elevation. The smooth effect, 'light dusk' coloured render is referred to as 'pink' by the Council. From my own observations, this reflects the illustration of the proposal within the design and access statement, and the

Council's observation on the colour has not been disputed by the appellant. Render of this tone would significantly contrast with the tone and finish of the traditional brick colours on the exterior of the majority of surrounding buildings, most particularly the houses within Symington Mews.

6. Given its comparative scale to surrounding buildings, the form and mass of the resultant dwelling would not, on its own, be harmful. However, the unsympathetic facing material together with the inconsistency in window design would draw the eye to the individual appearance of the development to the extent that there would be a significant disconnect between the building and its context on Symington Mews. Despite its position behind the developments on neighbouring streets, the proposal would be evident to surrounding residents where it would be seen as an incongruous addition to the locality.
7. The appellant suggests they would be agreeable to an alternative render finish or the use of brick slips. I also understand that plans showing brick slips were provided to the Council prior to its decision but that they were not formally accepted. Such plans have also not been provided as part of the appeal submission and the appeal process should not in any case be used to evolve a scheme.
8. Notwithstanding the above, without further clarification, it is unclear whether brick slips of a design, texture and colour which would more positively reflect the materials of other buildings in the immediate area could be provided. I also have no precise details of an alternative render colour to be able to consider whether it would better assimilate the proposal into its surrounding context. Therefore, I have based my recommendation on the drawings and details that are before me.
9. The three rooflights proposed would have an appropriate scale on the roof slope and would be suitably spaced apart from one another. Given their elevated height, they would not be highly perceptible within Symington Mews and so would not in themselves result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. Nevertheless, this does not overcome my other concerns.
10. My attention has been directed to houses along Coopersale Road which in some cases have been rendered and painted in bold colours. The principal elevations of those houses are viewed in a different street scene to the appeal dwelling. Moreover, those terraced properties still share a prevailing uniformity in architectural design style and fenestration pattern with their neighbours on Coopersale Road.
11. I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies LP1 (Design Quality and Local Character) and LP17 (Housing Design) of the Hackney Local Plan 2033 (LP) and Policies D3 (Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach) and D6 (Housing quality and standards) of The London Plan (2021) (TLP) in so far as they seek development to be of a high quality design and to respond to local character. The proposal would also conflict with the guidance contained within the London Borough of Hackney's Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Extensions and Alterations (2009) which seeks that extensions respect character and complement the individual house and the streetscape.

12. The Council have referred to Policy LP3 of the LP and Policy HC1 of TLP, which concern the conservation of heritage assets. I have not been made aware of any heritage assets that would be affected by the proposal. Therefore, these policies have not been decisive. In any case this does not diminish the conflict with the other identified policies of the development plan.

Other Matters

13. I have had regard to the structural, economic and environmental considerations that the appellant suggests have informed the proposed choice of materials, including, but not limited to, the effective insulation of the property. There would also be potential private benefits for occupiers of No 3 through improvements to the quality of living accommodation, in particular through increasing available light and space. However, these matters do not justify the harm that would result to the character and appearance of the area. Dismissing this appeal would also not prevent the appellant from exploring an alternative scheme which addresses these matters whilst also better responding to the surrounding visual context.
14. The appellant suggests that there has been a lack of communication and consistency in advice received from the Council. In any event, this is not a matter relating to the planning merits of the appeal scheme, which must be the focus of this recommendation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. 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

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

M Russell

INSPECTOR