



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2024

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/24/3354190

40 Skeena Hill, Wandsworth, London, SW18 5PL

- 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 Jasmin and Cyrus Talati against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref is 2024/1894.
 - The development proposed is described as 'demolition of existing garage to be replaced by a set back double storey side extension, creation of a basement under part of the existing foot print and rear extension, changes to existing roof including installation of roof lights, creation of a rear dormer window, existing windows to be replaced to match original and internal alterations'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including on the Sutherland Grove Conservation Area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular reference to outlook.

Preliminary Matter

3. The proposal was amended prior to the Council making its formal decision. These amendments included the retention of the existing garage, amendments to the design of the proposed dormer window and the rear extension and a reduction in the depth of the rear terrace. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the amended drawings.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is within the Sutherland Grove Conservation Area (CA). The Sutherland Grove Conservation Area Appraisal confirms that the special character of the CA is derived from the homely domestic 1920s-30s suburban

- housing with generous front gardens in a dramatic hilly streetscape coupled with the sophisticated urbane architecture of the former Whitelands College.
5. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Similar advice is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) and Policy LP3 of the Wandsworth Local Plan 2023 (WLP).
 6. The appeal property is a two storey, semi-detached dwelling with an attached single storey garage to the side.
 7. Part of the original ground floor garage would be retained and converted to living accommodation, with the garage door replaced by a window. The proposed side extension would be set back from the main front wall of the dwelling by 1m. The extension would have a width of about 2.55m and would also be set in further from the side boundary than the existing garage, enabling its original scale and form to be appreciated. I therefore find that the alterations to the garage are of little consequence to the significance of the CA. The proposed side extension would also have a significantly lower ridge and eaves height than the host dwelling and overall, when viewed from Skeena Hill, I am satisfied that it would appear subservient in size and scale to the host dwelling.
 8. The appeal property is paired with 42 Skeena Hill, a property of a similar design that has been altered by way of various extensions, including a large side dormer and a rear extension. The side dormer to No 42 has already resulted in an unbalanced appearance between the semi-detached pair. The set back of the proposed extension would still enable the original form of the pair of houses to be understood.
 9. Whilst the proposed side extension would narrow the gap between the appeal property and 38 Skeena Hill, the staggered siting between the two dwellings would ensure that a terracing effect would not occur and glimpses through to the rear of the site would remain obtainable. Moreover, this part of the conservation area is not particularly characterised by the gaps between the semi-detached pairs, with many properties extending across the full width of their plots. Having regard to all of the above considerations, I conclude that the proposed side extension would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the CA.
 10. There are notable changes in levels in Skeena Hill where the rear gardens of the dwellings on the northern side, including the appeal site, drop steeply to the rear so that they are accessed from the ground floor level via steps.
 11. Both the adjacent dwellings, Nos 38 and 42 have been extended to the rear. The proposed lower ground floor would have a depth of about 5.4m and a width of 9.4m and would be exposed to the rear due to the change in levels. The ground floor extension would be of the same width but would have a reduced depth of about 4 metres. A terrace would be provided on the remaining roof of the lower ground floor extension, with steps leading down to the garden.
 12. The proposed ground floor extension would have a mono pitch roof of the same height overall, as the existing extension to No 42. However, the extension

would project beyond the ground floor extension at No 42 by about 2m. This, coupled with the width of the extension, spanning the original house and the proposed extension to the side, would result in a highly dominant extension which would visually overwhelm the rear elevation of the host dwelling and its attached pair. I note that No 38 has also recently been extended to the rear but having regard to its flat roof design and lesser scale, it is not as visually prominent as the appeal proposal.

13. I acknowledge that the proposed rear extension would not be visible from Skeena Hill. However, the extensions would be very visible from neighbouring properties and would appear highly dominant within the surrounding rear garden environment. Thus, in this regard the extensions would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area and accordingly, would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
14. The Council has raised no concern in relation to the proposed dormer window which is of a similar design and appearance to the existing dormer on the rear of 42 Skeena Hill. I similarly find the dormer to be of an appropriate size, scale and design.
15. To conclude on this main issue, in addition to the conflict with national policy and legislation identified above, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies LP1, LP2, LP3 and LP5 of the WLP and the Council's Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2016. Together these policies and guidance seek to protect the district's heritage assets and (amongst other things) to ensure that developments provide a high-quality design that contributes positively to local character and that rear extensions are subservient to the original host dwelling and its setting and would not be overly dominant.

Living conditions

16. The proposed ground floor extension would extend about 2m beyond the adjacent extension to 42 Skeena Hill. In this regard, the proposed development would not be significantly overbearing when viewed from the adjacent raised terrace, or from windows on the rear of the No 42. Similarly, it is unlikely that the proposed would have any significant effect on light levels within the property.
17. No 40 is set deeper into its plot than 38 Skeena Hill. However, the recent extension to the rear of No 38 has reduced the effect the proposed extension would otherwise have had on the living conditions of the occupiers of that property. Nonetheless, the proposed extension, due to a combination of its height and depth, would introduce a large expanse of brickwork close to the boundary with No 38, resulting in an overbearing effect which would be detrimental to the living conditions of the occupiers of that property. Furthermore, the proposed extensions, due to the depth of the ground floor extension, would be highly imposing when viewed from the neighbouring gardens at Nos 38 and 42 and would be harmful to the outlook currently enjoyed by the occupants of those dwellings.
18. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers with particular reference to outlook. Thus, it would fail to accord with Policy LP2 of the WLP which, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure that development is not

visually intrusive or has an overbearing impact as a result of its height, scale, massing or siting.

Conclusion

19. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR