



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2024

by **A Wright BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3346599

27 Morden Road, Blackheath, Greenwich SE3 0AD

- 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 K Bahra against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 24/0281/HD.
 - The development proposed is described as 'demolition of existing single storey rear conservatories and the erection of 4m single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development set out in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. However, it is clear from the plans that the proposal also includes external alterations. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and so shall I.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises an attractive detached house situated on a generous plot within a residential area. It is a two-storey hipped roof building with accommodation in the roof space and two conservatories to the rear. Although the property is not listed, it lies within the private Cator Estate which constitutes a substantial part of the CA, a designated heritage asset.
5. Having regard to the Blackheath Park CA Appraisal, the special significance of the CA derives in part from the quality and diversity of its housing, ranging from grand Georgian and Victorian villas to compact flats, developed from the late 18th century onwards. It is typified by its quiet and suburban quality which has combined with the area's rich architectural history to create a sense of grandeur and exclusivity. The appeal property makes a positive contribution to the architectural quality of the CA as it forms one of a pair of similarly designed, classically symmetrical dwellings.
6. The proposal is to demolish the conservatories and construct a single storey extension spanning across most of the width of the rear elevation with a first floor extension above part of it, together with alterations to rear window openings. It

does not include flank windows and there have been some other changes to the proposed design since a previous proposal for the site was dismissed on appeal¹.

7. There is no dispute that the scale of the ground floor extension, considered alone, would respect the form of the host dwelling and the character of the area, and this is consistent with the Inspector's findings on the previous scheme. The first floor addition would be less than half the width of the house, with a similar height to the existing eaves. However, due to its position and height, the first floor extension would result in the proposal as a whole appearing to be a bulky and dominant addition which would not be subservient to the original building. Whilst set in from the site boundaries and north flank wall, the extension would be evident in views from Morden Road and surrounding properties, where it would not appear to be a subordinate addition. As such, it would conflict with the Council's Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which requires the scale, bulk and massing of double storey extensions to not overwhelm existing buildings.
8. Similar to the findings on the previous proposal, the first floor rear addition would detract from the cohesive and mirrored architectural appearance and symmetry of the appeal dwelling with its detached pair. As this would be evident in public and private views of the appeal building and the pair of houses of which it forms part, this would not reflect the architectural quality of properties in the CA.
9. The proposed extension would have fenestration and materials to match the existing house. However, this does not overcome the harm that I have found due to the scale and height of the proposal.
10. For the reasons set out, the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA, although the harm would be less than substantial. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
11. The appeal scheme would result in a larger house with more living space for its occupants which is a private benefit. I have not been directed to any public benefits in this case and consequently there is no clear and convincing justification for the harm I have identified.
12. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. It would be contrary to Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021 and Policies DH1, DH3, DH(a) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan Core Strategy with Detailed Policies 2014. Together, these require developments to be of a high quality design and to preserve or enhance heritage assets. The proposal would also conflict with the Framework.

Other Matters

13. The appellant states that the site is not subject to an Article 4 direction. Nevertheless, I must determine the proposal on its merits based on the plans before me.
14. The Council did not find harm or development plan conflict in relation to several other matters, including flood risk and neighbouring living conditions. However,

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/23/3327881 'the previous proposal/scheme'

even if I were to agree with the Council on these points, the absence of harm would be a neutral matter which would not carry weight in favour of the proposed scheme.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

A Wright

INSPECTOR