



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2025

by A Wright BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3347117

6 Kirk Lane, Plumstead, Greenwich SE18 3AD

- 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 Esther Law against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 24/1111/HD.
 - The development proposed is the retention of the rear dormer window and two front roof lights to form a new bedroom and bathroom in the existing roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Some works on the proposed development have already been carried out. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal based on the submitted plans.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Plumstead Common Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a two storey dwelling with a pitched tiled roof and a rear outrigger within a residential area where terraced properties are prevalent. The terraced row has side roof parapets and chimneys with no other front rooflights. Although there are rear dormers on properties in the wider area, outside the CA, there are no rear dormers evident on other dwellings in the terrace or on the houses behind. This gives a sense of uniformity to the immediate roofscape.
5. As outlined in the Plumstead Common Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CAA), the historic significance of the CA derives in part from the ancient common land and rows of typical two storey terraced Victorian houses interspersed with local landmark buildings on its rim which contribute to its setting. Although the CAA does not include Kirk Lane within the list of properties in the CA, it clarifies that the address list is not definitive, and the appeal site is clearly shown within the CA on the boundary map. The appeal property makes a positive contribution to the CA due to it being an attractive traditional Victorian cottage in a terraced row.
6. The proposed dormer extends across much of the rear pitched roof. Although finished in hung tiles which will weather to match the existing house, due to its length, height and flat roof, the dormer is a bulky, discordant and insubordinate addition to the appeal property and terrace. Whilst the dormer extension does not

project above the existing roof ridge, its size and position mean that the jarring and incongruous appearance is evident in views from Kirk Lane, Vambury Road nearby and surrounding properties. Therefore, the proposal compromises the consistency and unity of the terrace, causing harm to the significance of the appeal property, terrace row and wider street scene of the CA.

7. The Council's Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2022 (SPD) requires rear dormers to be well spaced and positioned within the existing roof slope and the CAA indicates that they should be small and suitably designed. For the reasons set out, the proposed rear dormer does not meet the guidance outlined in the SPD and CAA.
8. The appellant indicates a willingness to change the front window openings to conservation rooflights, but the proposed plans indicate projecting rooflights. Due to their projection, the front rooflights detract from the flush roof plain and the harmony of the terrace roofscape, appearing discordant in views from Kirk Lane.
9. For the above reasons, the proposal neither preserves nor enhances the character or appearance of the CA, a designated heritage asset, although the harm is 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.
10. The appeal scheme is intended to provide more living space for the occupants of the house as part of ongoing building renovation, optimising the capacity of the site as advocated by London Plan Policy D3, 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.
11. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. It is 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 where they require high quality development which preserves or enhances heritage assets. The proposal also conflicts with the Framework.

Other Matters

12. The Council did not find harm or development plan conflict in relation to neighbouring living conditions. However, even if I were to agree with the Council on this point, the absence of harm is a neutral matter which does not carry weight in favour of the proposal.
13. The appellant has expressed general dissatisfaction with the Council's handling of the application. However, this is a matter between those parties, and it does not in this instance have any bearing on my determination of this appeal.

Conclusion

14. 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