



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2025

by **C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/D/24/3351151

87 Manor Way, Blackheath, London, SE3 9XG

- 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 Richard Gomer against the decision of the Council of The Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 24/1340/HD.
 - The development proposed is described as 'extension to the rear of the property at first floor level, roof configuration and internal layout alterations'.
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Preliminary matters

1. I consider the Council's description of the proposed development as contained on their Decision Notice to be more accurate than that on the application form and so have determined this appeal on that basis, namely 'construction of a two storey rear extension and front porch enlargement; removal of existing rear dormers and two side-facing front dormers; construction of a new rear dormer extension; replacement of windows to the front, rear and side; other associated external alterations'.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Blackheath Park Conservation Area. I have a duty under s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Area.
4. The appeal property is a two storey detached house, which forms part of a group of early 20th Century houses of Arts and Crafts style. As noted in a recent appeal¹, the buildings vary in individual design, but there are common elements and materials that give a strong level of coherence to the group. The houses along Manor Way are set back from the road, which is a spacious and leafy part of the Blackheath Park Conservation Area, and the houses contribute positively to the Area. The Council's Blackheath Park Conservation Area Appraisal 2013 (CAA) identifies the

¹ APP/E5330/D/23/3317131

- significance of the Area coming from the quality and diversity of its housing, and the harmonious relationship between dwellings and landscape.
5. The property has a distinctive T-shaped plan, where there is a central double storey element protruding to the front of the house either side of which are steep roof slopes that sweep down to the ground floor. The quality of this attractive design has been diminished by side dormers on the protruding element, and a garage to one side upsets the balance of the property, but nonetheless the house is of good design that contributes to the character of the Conservation Area.
 6. The proposed works would see the removal of these side dormers and an extension to the porch that broadly mirrors the scale of the garage. These changes would represent an enhancement to the appearance of the building. Due to visibility of the house in the street scene and along Manor Way, this represents a modest but notable positive effect on the Conservation Area, and so would enhance the character and appearance of the Area.
 7. The roof to the rear of the property, like that at the front, is steeply sloped and sweeps down to eaves at ground floor level. However, there have been extensions and alterations to the rear. There is a single storey addition with pitched roof that relates awkwardly to the original roof, alterations to the original dormer at first floor and additional dormers at that level, and additional dormers at attic level. I concur with the conclusions in the previous appeal that these changes create a cluttered appearance to the rear elevation and, although there remains an Arts and Craft aesthetic, these detract from that original character and form of the building.
 8. The proposed extension would see demolition of the existing rear extension and building out with a full-width, flat-roofed extension that projects beyond the proposed two storey element of the extension. That two storey element would have a vertical rear elevation and be almost full-width to the house. The new roof on the rear extension would be pitched to the rear with a crown roof element, and there would be a single dormer to the rear at attic level.
 9. The current proposals differ from those shown in the previous appeal, where it was concluded the remaining Arts and Crafts aesthetic of the house would be lost, and that additions to the rear would be overly prominent and out of keeping with the area. In my view, the scale and design of the ground floor extension in the current appeal would have little effect on the appearance of the house or the wider area, as it is associated with the removal of the existing cumbersome ground floor extension, does not interfere with the upper floors and roof area, and has very limited visibility in the wider area.
 10. However, whilst I concur with my colleague Inspector's view that a vertical first floor elevation and hipped roof design is broadly compatible with the adjoining houses, I share the concerns of the Council regarding the scale of this element of the works. The width of the extension at first floor leaves a limited amount of the characteristic steeply sloped roof at that level, and the roof is an important part of the original Arts and Crafts aesthetic of the house which contributes to the wider area. Similarly, at attic level the rear extension would have an imbalanced rear roof slope, with the new dormer appearing off-set on that roof slope.
 11. By having a sloped roof on only one side at first floor and attic floor, there would be an uneven appearance to the rear of the property where it is evident that balance

was an important visual matter to the original house at front and rear. Although that balance has been lost with later alterations to the rear, the design, scale and form of the current scheme does not show a suitable rectification of the existing disrupted appearance.

12. I acknowledge the appellant's submissions that the extensions to the rear have limited visibility in the wider area, but they are still seen in a spacious and leafy area where the scale and design of other houses are visible to many properties, and this forms part of the character of the area. I further note that there have been changes at first floor and roof level to a number of properties in the area, and any extensions to the appeal property would be seen in this context.
13. The scale of the extensions have been reduced from that previously proposed. However, it is my conclusion that the width and imbalanced form of the proposed extension at first floor and attic level would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the Conservation Area. Although I have found earlier that the removal of the dormers to the front elevation would have a positive effect on the Area, the harm from the rear extensions would outweigh this.
14. Taken as a whole, it is my conclusion the scheme would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals therefore conflict with Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), and DH1, DH3, DH(a) and DH(h) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure development pays special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas, and that residential extensions are of a scale and design appropriate to the area. The proposals would also conflict with guidance in the Council's Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (2023), which requires high quality design in new development.
15. Thus, there would be harm to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset and I attach considerable importance and weight to this harm. That harm would be less than substantial and so, in accordance with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework, must be considered against the public benefit of the proposal.
16. The proposal is to provide more living space to an existing dwelling in residential use, which is a private benefit. The works would allow for improved energy efficiency in the building. Whilst this is a public benefit, I am not persuaded on the information before me that the appeal scheme is the only way to achieve such goals. Thus, I attach little weight to this matter, and my overall conclusion is that there are no public benefits arising from the proposed works that would outweigh the harm identified.
17. My conclusions on the main issue therefore remain the same and the appeal is dismissed.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR