



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 April 2025

by Mark Caine BSc (Hons) MTPL MRTPI LSRA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 May 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/D/24/3350705

41 Ringmore Rise, Lewisham, London SE23 3DE

- 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 Tarunya Siddharth Kumar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref is DC/24/135896.
 - The development proposed is described as 'the front facing single storey extension at lower ground level/pavement level to provide a secure garage space'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Notwithstanding the description of the proposed development set out above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details before me that the development also includes the removal of steps to the front and side of No 41, and the installation of railings above the proposed garage. The Council has dealt with it on this basis and so shall I.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a large, detached dwelling house that sits in a prominent location close to the junction of Ringmore Rise and Liphook Crescent. These streets are predominantly characterised by detached houses that sit within generously sized plots and are laid out in a regular manner. The topography of the area is such that dwellings on the side of the road where No 41 is situated are elevated above the level of the highway. They are also set back from the street behind tiered front gardens, boundary walls, hedges and trees.
5. A few of the dwellings along Ringmore Rise have been altered or extended in some way. Due to the undulating nature of the surroundings some boundary walls are also taller than others. However, gaps in between these houses and to the side of their tiered front garden areas, in the form of driveways, combine with the setbacks to provide visual relief to the built-up character of the locality. These factors provide a sense of separation and space that positively contribute to this part of the street.

6. There is no strict uniformity in either the width or the height of the front gardens in the street. The proposal would also not turn the front garden into an area of hardstanding since the proposed garage would be located on an area that is a hard surfaced driveway. Indeed, part of the existing raised landscaped front garden would remain.
7. Nonetheless, the Council measures the proposed extension to have a height of approximately 2.9 metres (m), with a flat roof to provide a roof terrace above it. It would also project outwardly from the facade of the dwelling by around 5.9m so that its front elevation aligns with the existing boundary wall and fully infills the gap that is currently utilised as a driveway.
8. Despite the presence of a similar development at No 43, the mass and bulk of the proposal would be an obvious element that would stand out above the existing front wall, and forward of the principal elevation of the main dwelling and the neighbouring properties to the north. A large rectangular shaped garage door would also punctuate its frontage. All these factors would combine to present a built-up, bulky and unduly dominant feature that would appear visually jarring and conspicuous in its context. This impact would be compounded by the introduction of railings above the garage, thereby drawing the eye, and further accentuating its visual prominence from certain directions. Accordingly, the proposal would significantly erode the sense of spaciousness and introduce an incongruous feature into the street scene.
9. I appreciate that there are similar developments at No 7 and No 43. However, these are very much in the minority, and I do not consider their presence to be a reason for justifying further harm to the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the planning permission at No 45 has not been fully implemented and the approved garage aspect of this scheme does not form a part of the local context.
10. As such, I find that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the street scene. It would therefore conflict with Policy 15 of the Lewisham Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011, Policies 30 and 31 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan 2014 and Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021. These seek, amongst other matters, to achieve high quality design, by creating an urban form that contributes to local distinctiveness and maintains the quality of the street scene. It would also fail to accord with the design objectives of the Framework, as advised in Section 12
11. In addition, conflict would arise with the design advice contained within the Council's Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2019, which sets out that modern projections beyond the established building line can be highly disruptive elements within the streetscape.

Other Matters

12. An appeal decision at No 33 has been referred to me. There was no mention of the contribution that the frontages to the dwellings made to the character and appearance of the area in this appeal. However, that proposal was for a single storey side extension with storage area below. On the evidence presented I therefore cannot be certain that its specific circumstances are directly comparable to those which apply in this case.

13. The Council has raised no objections in respect of the principle of altering and extending homes, and the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. I am also aware that the site is not within a conservation area and that most of the main dwelling's architecture and detailing would remain legible. Furthermore, the Council's Highways and Transport Section, local ward councillors and local residents have not raised any concerns. Nevertheless, the absence of harm in these respects does not weigh in favour of the proposal. In addition, the level of local residents' support or objection for a scheme are not determining factors in the consideration of an appeal.
14. Furthermore, there is no evidence to substantiate the level of vehicle crime levels before me. Whilst the appellant's experience in this respect is noted, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal is the only practical means of enhancing the security of vehicles on the site. As such, this matter, nor any of those raised above would outweigh or overcome the harm that I have identified. The proposal would therefore not constitute sustainable development for which there is a presumption in favour.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the development conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations that warrant taking a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Mark Caine

INSPECTOR