
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 May 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/25/3358954

35, 37, 39 Chaucer Road, Herne Hill, London SE24 0NY

- 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 Maria Jose Bernados, Chris Blaik, Melissa Porte, and Poppy Macinnes against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref is 24/02881/FUL.
 - The proposed development is described as: 'The erection of a mansard roof extension with front and rear dormer windows across 35, 37, 39 Chaucer Road, Herne Hill'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Poet's Corner Conservation Area (PCCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of three properties in a residential area located in the PCCA. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
4. The special character of the PCCA designation is derived from the great variety of 'pattern book' houses spanning the period 1855 to the end of the century, with the combination of a wide range of decorations and various types of brick. The area was developed as a result of the railway expansion of the mid nineteenth century. The four roads, Chaucer Road, Spenser Road, Shakespeare Road and Milton Road, along with the north side of Dulwich Road, are definable from the surrounding area. The historic integrity, variety of scale, brick work and architectural detailing contribute positively to the character and appearance of the PCCA as a whole and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
5. Paragraph 4.106 of Lambeth's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Part 4 (2023) states that London roofs are part of Lambeth's and London's local distinctiveness. The proposal would extend across the entire roof of the host buildings. Whilst it would be partially obscured by the existing perimeter parapets, it would be large in scale. Mansard roof extensions are not characteristic of the area; therefore, the appeal proposal would result in an alien and dominant feature on these terraced properties. Furthermore, the adverse effect would be exacerbated by the height of the proposal. This is because the existing ridgeline of

the host buildings is already higher than that of the adjacent properties along the same side of the road. Views of the proposal would be available from Chaucer Road and the neighbouring properties, including their gardens and windows, particularly at upper floor level. This adverse effect would not be localised as suggested. For that reason, the loss of London roofs in the PCCA would not be acceptable. Consequently, the proposal would result in an inappropriate and unsympathetic addition to the host properties and would also harm the significance of the PCCA.

6. At my site visit, I observed that there are a variety of roof extensions along this road. However, they sit comfortably within the surrounding area because they are small in size, or the design of such extensions still allows the original roof form to be clearly appreciated.
7. In relation to other examples along Effra Parade and Barnwell Road, these properties are not situated within the PCCA. Other examples on Milton Road, Spenser Road and Shakespeare Road are not seen in the same context. The extensions on Milton Road also predate the designation of the PCCA, as such, they do not set a precedent that would justify the proposal. On the eastern side of Chaucer Road there is a new dwelling on a garden plot. It did not result in the loss of historic features, and it has a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the PCCA. Therefore, I do not find it directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
8. Accordingly, I find that the appeal proposal would harm the character and appearance of the PCCA. Therefore, the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the PCCA. Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, the harm to the heritage asset would be at the higher end of less than substantial.
9. The approach in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, as in this case, that harm should be balanced against the public benefits of the proposal.
10. I note that the proposal would provide additional living space for each building without enlarging the footprint of the building and the proposal may also provide accommodation for vulnerable tenants. Furthermore, the scheme may facilitate the repair and/or restoration of the existing roof parapet. However, even when taken together, these benefits are modest, and the Framework indicates that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. I therefore find that the public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the less than substantial harm, leading to conflict with historic environment policies of the Framework.
11. Overall, the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the PCCA and would therefore conflict with s72(1) of the Act. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policies Q5, Q11 and Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2021) and Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021). These policies, amongst other things, seek to protect designated heritage assets from proposals that would adversely affect their significance. These policies also seek to achieve high quality design that respect the scale and character of the host building and the surrounding area.

Other Matters

12. The appellant states the increase in floor area would provide extra accommodation in the one rented dwelling in the block which provides accommodation for vulnerable tenants, whom they describe as refugees. In this regard, the appellant's case has not been further substantiated. Whilst I appreciate the proposal may provide a social benefit in this regard, based on the information provided, this does not outweigh the harm to the conservation area, identified above and dismissing the appeal would be a necessary and proportionate response in this case.
13. I have considered the appellant's concerns about the roof leaking. But I am not satisfied that the proposal is the only means by which such an issue may be addressed.

Conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

O Tresise

INSPECTOR