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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 12 August 2025**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/D/25/3360761**

**14 Townley Road, London SE22 8SR**

- 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 Lauren Juliff against the decision of the London Borough of Southwark.
  - The application Ref is 24/AP/1963.
  - The development proposed is a first floor side extension over existing ground floor side extension with rooflights and photovoltaic panels, ground floor rear extension with rooflights and photovoltaic panels, insulated render to existing ground floor side extension, modifications to garden gate, replacement of single glazed windows with double glazed windows.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. As the appeal relates to a building within a Conservation Area, I have paid special regard to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) which requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
3. Whilst I was unable to access the rear of the property on the day of my site visit, I could see what I needed to from the public highway in order to determine the appeal.

### Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Dulwich Village Conservation Area (DVCA).

### Reasons

5. The appeal site is positioned opposite a sports ground, within a row of substantial dwellings that date from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Townley Road forms the northern extent of the DVCA which has an established spacious character with an open, leafy feel arising from the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares, its numerous parks, playing fields and large gardens and its views along streets as well as between buildings. Townley Road is distinguished by its groups of 5-8 houses, which from the street have the appearance of a tight row of semi-detached properties but are connected with each other to the rear in the manner of a terrace.

6. In this regard No 14 is a semi-detached property at the end of a group of 5 houses. It is separated from the neighbouring row of houses to the east by an open gap. This physical separation of the blocks and their orientation relative to each other and the street, allows views of the property's verdant rear garden beyond. There are similar breaks at the end of other housing blocks, formed by Dovercourt Road and Beauval Road and the sports ground adjacent to St Barnabus Church. Together these breaks establish a strong rhythm along the street, allow visual permeability, and provide relief and separation between the tight groups of houses.
7. Taking into account the above, in so far as relevant to the proposal, the significance and special interest of the DVCA is associated with the rhythm and gaps between the historic building groupings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
8. It is argued that the extension would be modest in scale, height and massing and due to the articulation of Townley Road it would be visually tucked away. However, the proposal would be excessive in scale, insufficiently subordinate to its host, and it would add significant bulk to the side of the property. As a result it would unbalance the pair of semi-detached properties, creating a discordant asymmetrical form. Moreover, the height, width and bulk of the proposed development would partially close the open gap, weakening the separate identity of the housing groups and preventing views of mature trees to the rear which contribute positively to the area's sense of openness and verdant character and appearance.
9. Notwithstanding the playing fields opposite and that there might only be views in passing along the road, nevertheless the proposal would be clearly visible and conspicuous in public views.
10. The Council raises no concerns in relation to the proposed ground floor rear extension, installation of insulated render to the existing ground floor side extension, replacement windows, rear garden terrace, garden gate and garden sheds. Based on the evidence before me and what I saw, I see no reason to disagree. However, for reasons explained above, the proposed side extension would be prominent in the streetscene and it would not contribute positively to its sense of place or local distinctiveness. As it would be detrimental to the DVCA, the proposal would not preserve the significance of the designated heritage asset. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of this appeal.
11. Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and paragraph 212 of the Framework establishes that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Given the scale and form of the proposal in the DVCA, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
12. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would result in enhanced internal living accommodation. This would be a significant private benefit to the appellant. However, the property is already a residential dwelling suitable for occupation by a family. There would be limited economic benefits in the short term during construction. Based on the scale of the proposal, I have given these benefits limited weight.

13. Given the above, I find that the limited public benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified. Therefore, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the DVCA. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, the Framework and conflict with development plan policies P13, P14 and P20 of the Southwark Plan 2019-2036 and Policy HC1 of The London Plan - The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. These policies require, among other things, the height, scale and massing of development to respond positively to the existing townscape and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

### **Other Matters**

14. My attention has been drawn to various planning permissions in the DVCA, although none are in Townley Road. However, there is little evidence that they are directly comparable to the proposal, including in terms of their surrounding context. As such they do not provide a justification for the proposal, which I have considered on its own merits.

### **Conclusion**

15. For the reasons set out above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*SE Hughes*

INSPECTOR