



M G Bacchus MA FCA FRSA MInstD
92, Jerningham Road,
Telegraph Hill,
London. SE14 5NW

Tel / Fax: (020)-7635 9421
E-mail: ths@baccma.co.uk

The Telegraph Hill Society

Planning Service
London Borough of Lewisham
Laurence House
1 Catford Road
London SE6 4SW

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Dear Sir

Application DC/ 20/116607

The construction of a replacement rear extension at 21 Bousfield Road SE14.

We are pleased that this application, unlike others to which we have objected and which have been commonly refused, the applicant in this case is retaining the existing bay window and is not seeking to extend the development beyond the line of the neighbouring extension. These are both commendable points

In this case therefore, and in view of the existing extension, our objections solely relate to design aspects of the extension although in other cases we shall continue to object to the principal of wrap-around extensions.

Design

We note that the SPG on Alterations and Extensions states that wrap-around extensions will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate exceptional design quality. We accept that that the SPG states that “a modern, high quality design is generally more acceptable” but this does not override the requirement for that design to be exception nor override the requirements of planning policy which require: the proposals to be of a high quality and sensitive design and respecting or complementing the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics and detailing of the original building (DM 31.1) and that applications within the Conservation Area to be compatible with the special characteristics of the area including, specifically, form and materials. (DM 36.4).

We would stress that DM Policy 36 states the Council will not permit an extension which is “*incompatible with the special characteristics of the area, its buildings, spaces, settings and plot coverage, scale, form and materials.*” Despite what the SPG on Alterations and Extensions might imply is no exemption for “modern high-quality design”. The Council cannot permit an extension which is incompatible with the materials used in the area or which are incompatible with its special characteristics even if the proposal is of an exceptional design quality. The characteristics of the Area are clearly set out in the Telegraph Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

The proposed extension has a rear façade which has a large single glass window, reaching to ground level with no ornamentation together with “Shou-Shgi-Ban Kebbonny” black timber cladding. These are not materials or features which are found within the Conservation Area. Whilst a wooden, glass conservatory might be considered to be an appropriate addition to a Victorian property within the area, the design style chosen does not reflect this, although it would have been possible so to do.

The design also includes several rooflights which appear to extend above the roofline (as far as the proposed side elevation shows) although this does not appear to be reflected in the rear elevation drawing.

We consider therefore that this application is not in accordance with DM31 which requires:

- that extensions must be considered in relation to the site and that they should “*respect and/or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, and detailing of the original buildings, including external features such as chimneys, and porches*” and
- that “*additional or enlarged windows, doors and other openings, should be in keeping with the original pattern*” and should not “*cause an incongruous element in terms of the important features of a character area*”
nor is it in accordance with DM36 as stated above which requires the Council to refuse an extension which is:
- *incompatible with the special characteristics of the area, its buildings, spaces, settings and plot coverage, scale, form and materials.*

Height of extension

Paragraph 4.2.3 of the SPG on Alterations and Extensions states that:

Where a pitched roof is proposed, the ridge height should be visibly lower than the sill of any first floor windows (minimum of 2 or 3 brick courses).

The rear elevation shows that the ridge height extends 5 brick courses above the sills on the first floor. The proposed design is therefore contrary to this paragraph of the SPG.

Rooflights

The proposal includes huge areas of roof light over the kitchen/dining area which will, we presume, be in constant use. The light from this will have an adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Given the size of the rear elevation windows, even if these were recast into a more appropriate style, and the absence of rooflights in the existing extension we cannot see the need for such extensive rooflights.

This issue is an increasing source of complaint by residents where such windows have been allowed in the past and a number of Councils are making specific planning policies against such rooflights although we believe DM30.1 is sufficiently generally worded to deal with this situation.

Yours faithfully



M G Bacchus
Chairman, Telegraph Hill Society.