
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 September 2016

by Joanna Reid BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 27 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Y/16/3148347

4 Clifford Street, London W1S 2LG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Isabel Ettedgui against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00978/LBC, dated 4 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 April 2016.
 - The works proposed are "the redecoration of the street elevation and basement and ground-floor level and for the re-painting of the upper floor windows. The proposed improvements to the elevation would be completed in addition to the works to enhance the listed building approved as part of applications 15/07258/FULL and 15/07259/LBC."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, and whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Mayfair Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building, 4 Clifford Street, is listed in Grade II as a 4-storey plus basement terrace house of 1719 by John Witt. It includes an early C19 semi-circular arched doorway and enlarged ground floor window. The form, features and historic appearance of the listed building are important to its special architectural interest and to its significance as a historic dwelling that now includes a shop. It is located within the Conservation Area which is characterised by historic grid iron estate developments that were influenced by the underlying geography, and its mainly historic architecture, which includes many listed buildings. Some streets include large terraces where each building contributes to a unified composition and in others, including Clifford Street, single attached buildings are part of the terraces. The historic building styles, use of materials, and their generally sympathetic colour schemes, contribute positively to the appearance of the Conservation Area, and to its significance as an important area of historic townscape.
4. The ground floor of the listed building includes the larger window that has contributed to its suitability for commercial use since about the early C19. However, the extent of the stucco work to the ground floor, the lack of a

traditional fascia sign panel, the openness in the basement area and the railings around it maintain much of its original domestic character.

5. Almost all of the ground floor and basement walls, and the previously-painted surfaces, would be redecorated in 'Lamp Black'. This colour is said to be dark grey, but it would be so dark that many passers-by would take it to be black. Due to its very dark tone, the important shadows that contribute positively to the appreciation of the modelled form of architectural elements of the listed building, including the timber glazing bars, door, stucco work, urn and pilaster capital, would be much harder to see. Because almost all of the ground floor and basement walls, and the previously-painted features would be decorated in the same dark colour, the distinction between the different materials would be much less clear. Furthermore, due to the visual effect of the change in colour, the brickwork would become the dominant architectural element, whereas in the scheme shown on plan CFS4/2214 'Decorative Scheme Existing' the brickwork provides the backdrop against which these architectural features can be appreciated. So, the proposal would harmfully erode the ability for passers-by to understand and enjoy the architecture of the listed building.
6. Most of the nearby buildings in Clifford Street have white or light decorated windows. Most with stucco work have white or light coloured features and where basement areas are finished in stucco they are mainly decorated in white or light colours. This is in line with advice in the *City of Westminster A Guide to Care and Maintenance – STUCCO*, which is supplementary planning guidance. Due to the dark colour of the finish and its application to nearly all of the painted features, the listed building would have a strident appearance that would contrast starkly with the nearby buildings in Clifford Street. The dark colour may reflect the appellant's company's 'identity'. However, because the building would stand out from others in the street, its unwarranted intrusion would erode the harmonious character of Clifford Street as a historic mainly residential street. The appeal building is also important to the settings of other nearby listed buildings, including the Grade II 5 Clifford Street, which is next door. Because the extensive use of the proposed colour would give much greater prominence to the appeal building, its obtrusive appearance would fail to preserve the settings of the nearby listed buildings. For these reasons, the proposal would damage the historic townscape character and the appearance of Clifford Street, which contribute positively to the Conservation Area as a whole.
7. Whilst many railings and some front doors would be expected to be black painted, there are some dark painted shop fronts in the locality. However, the latter are usually traditional full width shop fronts with large fascia signs, and where there are basement areas most have been enclosed. Most occur in main shopping streets, and the upper floor windows and other features are typically decorated in white or light colours. As 43 Conduit Street and 11 New Bond Street include white or light decorated windows in the upper floors and the dark upper floor windows at 3 St James Street include light coloured reveals, and because 3 St James Street and 11 New Bond Street have little or no stucco at ground floor level, these buildings differ from the proposal before me. The monochrome photograph in the appellant's representations shows that joinery at the listed building was decorated in a mid or dark tone in about 1942. However, the stucco work looks lighter, and the urn and pilaster capital look lighter still, so it provides little support for this damaging scheme.

8. The redecoration should help to preserve some of the historic fabric of the listed building, which would be a public benefit. However, as the Council's informative explains that the proposal could be acceptable in an appropriate colour, this public benefit attracts little weight. As almost no public benefits have been put to me, and the listed building would remain in its present use, the less than substantial harm that the proposed works would cause to the significance of the heritage assets would not be outweighed. Moreover, insufficient clear and convincing justification has been put to me to show that the works would be necessary to conserve the listed building in a manner appropriate to its significance as a historic dwelling that now includes a shop, or to conserve the Conservation Area in a manner appropriate to its significance as an important area of historic townscape.
9. Therefore, I consider that the proposed works would fail to preserve the special architectural interest of the listed building, and that they would fail to preserve or enhance the character or the appearance of the Conservation Area. It is also contrary to Policy S25 of *Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies* (CS) which aims to conserve heritage assets, CS Policy S28 which seeks respect for Westminster's heritage and local distinctiveness, Policy DES1 of the *City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan* which seeks high quality urban design, and the Framework, which aims to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal fails.

Joanna Reid

INSPECTOR