The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by John L Gray DipArch MSc Registered ArchitectI

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

Decision date: 5 December 2016

Appeal Ref. APP/L5810/D/16/3158731
103 Sheen Lane, London, SW14 8AE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Ms A Tarran against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
- The application, ref. 16/2674/HOT, dated 26 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2016.
- The development proposed is the demolition of the existing rear 2-storey extension and the construction of a part single-storey and part 2-storey rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed. Planning permission is granted for the demolition of the existing 2-storey rear extension and the construction of a part single-storey and part 2-storey rear extension at 103 Sheen Lane, London, SW14 8AE, in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. 16/2674/HOT, dated 26 May 2016, subject to the following conditions:
   1) the development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
   2) the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 166/1/1, 166/1/2, 166/1/3, 166/2/1, 166/2/2 and 161/2/3.
   3) the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in materials matching those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The Council has no objection to the design of the single-storey part of the proposed extension. Nor does it find any unreasonable impact from any part of the proposal on the amenities enjoyed by the neighbouring residents at 101 Sheen Lane. There is no reason to dispute these views. Accordingly, the main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed first floor extension on the character and appearance of no. 103, a Building of Townscape Merit and the Sheen Lane (Mortlake) Conservation Area, within which it stands.

Reasons

3. No. 103 is the most southerly of a terrace of twelve 2-storey cottages (nos. 81-103 odd) designated as Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTMs). This status is justified by their contribution to the Sheen Lane street scene. The Conservation Area is essentially a linear one, between Mortlake station to the north and Upper Richmond Road to the south, and has a mixed residential and commercial character. Changes to the rears of the cottages are evident, visible from parts of Milton Road, but the buildings' original form is still plain to see.

4. The first floor part of the proposed extension would, of necessity, be narrow, only about half the width of the narrow plot (about 3.5m wide at the eastern end of the extension). It is constrained physically by the position of the existing rear bedroom window and, in amenity terms, by the proximity of the first floor windows of no. 101. From the occupier's point of view, one of the evident advantages of the proposal is the ability to move the existing staircase out of the main part of the house and into the extension, enhancing the size and quality of the ground floor reception room.
5. The design of the extensions does very much what one would look for. There would be a hipped roof over the ground floor extension which would wrap around the first floor extension, albeit that it would be partly cut away at its corner. The first floor would also have a hipped roof, with its eaves line below that of the main roof so that the extension would be subordinate to the original house. There are various forms of first floor rear extension along the rear of the terrace, flat-roofed and pitched, with the pitched roof ridges being both below and above the main eaves line of the cottages. The first floor hipped roof of the appeal scheme would be unlike the others but would echo the extension roofs at ground floor level.
6. One criticism of the proposal might be that the first floor extension would be longer than others in the terrace. The perception of length would, however, be slightly reduced by the roof form and the lower eaves line at its eastern end. Also, and importantly, the fact that no. 103 is at the end of the terrace and has the substantial and blank flank wall of no. 105 alongside it means that that there is some scope for a design that would vary from the pattern in the rest of the terrace yet not obscure the original form of the cottage and terrace.
7. As the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Buildings of Townscape Merit says, these buildings are not the same as listed buildings. Any presumption in favour of preservation must be tempered by identifying why they are of merit and considering what harm would be done by any proposed works. In this case, the proposal would achieve an enhanced standard of accommodation within the cottage, thus helping to safeguard its future, without changing the street façade of the terrace and without any undue harm to the pattern of development at the rear.
8. Two previous proposals have been refused by the Council and dismissed at appeal. In APP/L5810/D/15/3095210, it was the combination of the length of the extension and the roof design that led the Inspector to his conclusion. In APP/L5810/D/15/3142865, the Inspector was concerned about the proposed flat roof. The hipped roof of the scheme subject of this appeal responds satisfactorily to the conclusions in the previous appeals.
9. To sum up, the proposed design would not cause undue harm to the character and appearance of the BTM itself, or the terrace of BTMs (nos. 81-103), and thus would not fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal would not offend against Core Strategy Policy CP7, Development Management Policies DM DC 1, DM HD 1 and DM HD 3 or the two SPDs, on Buildings of Townscape Merit and on House Extensions and External Alterations. The appeal may therefore be allowed.

John L Gray

Inspector