

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2016

by Richard Schofield BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 03 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/D/16/3162062
104 Conway Road, Southgate N14 7BG

- 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 Mr Steve Joannou against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 16/02571/HOU, dated 8 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is raising the ridge and adding two dormer windows to the roof of a detached garage (ancillary to the dwelling), providing an additional floor of work/ garage space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Lakes Estate Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Lakes Estate Conservation Area (the Conservation Area) covers a network of mature suburban streets, typically characterised by dense Edwardian residential development. This is typically made up of semi-detached and terraced two-storey houses, many retaining a remarkable array of historic features and detailing. Common are bay windows, ornamental red brickwork, chimneys, stained glass and decorative joinery. Roofs are varied in style, but dormers are not a typical feature. I concur with the findings of the Conservation Area Appraisal that the area's special interest derives primarily from the homogeneous, collective value of this high quality Edwardian housing.
 4. The appeal building is a low key detached garage, set back from the street behind gates, to the rear of 104 Conway Road (No 104). Although of no particular architectural merit it is unobtrusive and, with its shallow pitched roof and reasonably sympathetically coloured block work, does not appear at odds with its surroundings. Its impact upon the Conservation Area is neutral.
 5. The appeal proposal would make the building considerably more prominent in the streetscene. Its appearance would change from that of a simple, low key outbuilding to that of an incongruous, standalone domestic annex. This would place it squarely at odds with the prevailing form of the surrounding, two-storey, close knit residential development, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
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6. The Lakes Estate Conservation Area Appraisal recognises the addition of box dormers as detrimental to the Conservation Area. This may be in the context of additions to houses, but the appeal building does not exist in a bubble within the Conservation Area. Indeed, in my judgment, the addition of two atypical box dormers to what is a simple outbuilding would appear even more incongruous than they might on an extant dwelling.
7. My attention has been drawn to another development, which the appellant considers comparable to the appeal scheme. However, this appears to be for a very different scheme to that before me, on a site outside the Conservation Area. As such, I afford it little weight in my considerations.
8. The harm to the Conservation Area would be less than substantial and the appellant has suggested that the works would serve to improve the building and prevent its deterioration. However, the building did not appear to be in a particularly poor state and the appellant states that it is used as a garage, which suggests that it is fit for purpose. Even if this were not so, there is no evidence before me that the costs of the proposed works would be less than any basic repairs and/or maintenance. Thus, these factors do not lead me to the conclusion that the harm to the Conservation Area is outweighed.
9. Longer term, I am mindful of the National Planning Policy Framework's policy that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.
10. I conclude, therefore, that the appeal proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Lakes Estate Conservation Area. As such, it would conflict with policies CP30 and CP31 of the Enfield Core Strategy; policies DMD12, DMD13, DMD37 and DMD44 of the Enfield Development Management Document; and policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan. These seek, among other things, to ensure that new development, including proposals for outbuildings and roof extensions, is of a high quality design; has regard to the special character and interest of heritage assets; has no adverse visual impact; is of an appropriate height and bulk; and is in keeping with the character of the property and the local area.

Other Matters

11. The appeal proposal would also feature a canopy link between the appeal building and No 104. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, and the appellant has indicated that they would have no objection to the canopy's removal by condition, I have not addressed this further.
12. There is some dispute between the parties over the impacts that might arise from the potential use of the appeal building as a dwelling. There is not, however, any application for a change of use before me and, as such, this is not a matter that I consider further.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Schofield INSPECTOR