

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2016

by Rachel Walmsley BSc MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/16/3157348
60 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5RQ

- 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 Sam Ulph against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/0125, dated 30 September 2015, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is addition of roof conversion to top floor. Note drawings show the addition as a proposal in the existing building and also on a current approved scheme for the extension for the rest of the building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed although a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application form.

Main Issue

3. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and adjoining properties.

Reasons

4. The appeal site concerns a three storey mid terrace building which is part of a terrace of six properties that share a distinctive architectural form and character. Curved corners and the staggered alignment of the buildings create an interesting façade and streetscape which separates the buildings from others within the street. This separation is emphasised by the position of the properties within an urban block of their own.
 5. The Council suggests that in light of the well-preserved elevations of No 60 Lavender Hill, the building falls within the definition of a non-designated heritage asset in the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG). However,
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paragraph 041 of the PPG¹ states that buildings of historical importance should be identified in local lists in local plans and their significance ideally judged against published criteria to decide if they constitute a non-designated heritage asset. There is little evidence to this effect before me. There is no indication that the building is locally listed or identified for its historical importance within the Local Plan². The evidence points to the building being distinctive architecturally and together with the quality of its elevations and its grouping with adjoining buildings, the property is considered by the Council to be notable within the street. Indeed it was apparent from my observations on site that the architectural form of the upper floors of the building, as described, contributed appreciably to the character of the street overall. Nevertheless, the architectural form of the elevations alone does not amount to the building being of significant heritage interest. I find, therefore, that the building does not qualify as a non-designated heritage asset at set out in the PPG. I have therefore considered the proposal in the context of the character and appearance of the host dwelling and adjoining buildings.

6. The roof extension would extend a notable distance above the existing roof and therefore would be highly visible on top of the host building. The party walls either side of the glazing proposed would reinforce the extension's presence. Whilst a degree of subservience would be created by the glazing and the set back of the development from the existing parapet, the overall form and scale of the extension would dominate the host property, appearing incongruous above the existing roof line. This would be contrary to policy DMH5 of the Local Plan which supports development that is not so large that it dominates and competes with the original building.
7. The height of the parapet to No 60 is the same height as the parapets on the other buildings within the group. Despite the reported loss of some of the butterfly roofs, the raised parapets are a defining feature of the group of buildings. The extension would protrude above the line of these parapets, which in turn would have a discernible effect on the overall visual and architectural appearance of the group of the buildings. This would be contrary to policy DMH5 of the Local Plan which seeks to avoid roof extensions that are not visually intrusive.
8. I recognise that the Council's policies and guidance do not seek to preclude roof extensions where they do not already exist; indeed the SPD³ states that *in areas where none of the roofs have been altered it is particularly important that any alterations set a good example for the rest to follow*. The effort to design a high quality extension that has evolved over a number of years is recognised and the efforts made are welcomed. I also have no doubt that the design quality proposed would set a good example for other roof extensions to follow. However, this does not overcome the harm that I have found as a result of the form and scale of the extension. I am aware that the extension would be appreciated differently if roof extensions were replicated across all buildings within the group however this is not the development before me. Indeed there can be no guarantee that other roof extensions would be developed in the future; the letters of support from occupiers within the wider

¹ Paragraph 041 Reference ID: 18a-041-20140306

² Wandsworth Local Plan - Development Management Policies Document (adopted March 2016)

³ Wandsworth Local Plan - Supplementary Planning Document, Housing (adopted July 2015)

terrace is no indication that other roof extensions would come forward in the future.

9. It is apparent from the evidence before me and from my observations on site that there are existing roof extensions within the area as well as roof extensions that have planning permission but have not yet been constructed. These extensions are beyond the block of the six properties within which the appeal site sits. Given this separation, the proposal would not be appreciated within the same context as other roof extensions in such a way that it could be considered in-keeping with its surroundings. The presence of existing roof extensions, therefore, carries little weight in support of the proposal by way of precedent.
10. The appellant cites roof extensions that have been approved by the Council in areas where roof extensions do not currently exist; those of No 145 and No 36 Lavender Hill, No 993 Garratt Lane and No 53 Bedford Hill. Whilst these extensions were found to be appropriate within the context of their surroundings, they were also found to be acceptable in relation to the appearance of the building or terrace concerned. I have found that the proposed development would be harmful to the appearance of the host building and adjoining properties and therefore does not compare with the examples mentioned for them to carry weight in favour of the appeal.
11. The development would include improvements to the design quality of the front elevation, not least the reinstatement of cornices to first floor windows and the removal of paint from the front elevation. The development would also help to realise the development potential of the property and in light of the lack of objection from the Council, would appear to not impact on the amenity of occupiers of properties nearby. Whilst these benefits are welcomed, they do not address the harm that I have found to the character and appearance of the host building and adjoining properties as a result of the scale and form of the proposal.
12. I note that during the course of the scheme's evolution, the Council is reported to have given favourable consideration to the proposal. Whilst I appreciate that the outcome of the application will have been a disappointment to the appellant, informal advice given before an application is made is given without prejudice and cannot pre-determine the outcome of a subsequent application, which must take account of all material factors.
13. In all, therefore, I have found that the scale and form of the proposed roof extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and adjoining properties, and therefore would be contrary to policy DMH5 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the development would be contrary to the development plan and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

R Walmsley

INSPECTOR