

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2016

by Ian McHugh Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9 January 2017

Appeal Ref: T0355/D/16/3159084

72 Alexandra Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 1HU

- 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 Andrew Insch against the decision of The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 16/00427, dated 2 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear facing dormer and front conservation roof windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the Inner Windsor Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a terraced dwelling, which is situated in a densely built up area of Windsor and within the CA. In the vicinity of the appeal site, the CA is largely characterised by terraced houses, a number of which have been altered and extended. These alterations and extensions include dormer roof extensions. I viewed some of the existing roof extensions from the rear garden of the appeal property and from public vantage points at my site visit. The Council states that the majority of these roof extensions were carried out prior to the designation of the CA. The appellant also points to a recent planning permission for a rear dormer at number 78 Alexandra Road (reference 14/01698). However that dormer is of a different design to the appeal proposal. Furthermore, the majority of properties in the vicinity have not been extended at roof level and, in my view the original roofscapes contribute to the CA's character and appearance.
 4. There is a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This is reflected in Policy CA2 of the adopted Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 2003 (LP) and in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy
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Framework (the Framework). Furthermore, Policy H14 of the LP seeks (amongst other things) to ensure that proposals for house extensions do not adversely affect the character or appearance of the original property.

5. In reaching my decision, I have given careful consideration to the existence of other roof extensions within the CA. However, in my opinion, many of these extensions have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the CA. Consequently, I am not persuaded that they should act as a precedent for the appeal proposal.
6. In addition, I accept that the proposed dormer would not be readily visible from public viewpoints because of the screening effect of the two storey rear projecting section of the appeal property. However, the fact that a development cannot be seen is not (in my opinion) a reason in itself for granting planning permission.
7. No objection to the roof windows at the front of the property has been raised by the Council. In my view these would be acceptable as they would be of a sympathetic size and design. However, the proposed rear dormer addition would be a disproportionate and dominant addition to the roof because of its size. It would extend from just above eaves level to the ridge and would cover most of the width of the roof. Because of this, I consider that it would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and, in turn, it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Accordingly, it would conflict with the Development Plan and with the Framework, as referred to above.
8. I consider that the harm that I have identified would be 'less than substantial' in the context of paragraph 134 of the Framework. Accordingly, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I acknowledge that the proposal would benefit the appellant through the creation of extra living accommodation. However, I am not persuaded that this outweighs the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR