The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 February 2017

by G J Fort BA PGDip LLM MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/16/3160667
The Tower, The Terrace, Barnes, London SW13 0NP

- 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 and Mrs D Baldwin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
- The application Ref 16/3071/HOT, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 September 2016.
- The development proposed is a first and second floor rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The appellants' names were not given on the application form. Consequently, I have used the names given on the appeal form in the banner heading above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of its host building, and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barnes Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Situated in the Barnes Green Conservation Area and close to Barnes Bridge, the appeal property is one of a number of substantial but architecturally varied dwellings that form The Terrace, which is immediately across from and runs parallel with the sweep of the River Thames. The exceptional architectural quality of The Terrace contributes considerably to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole, which to a large degree consists in the Victorian and Edwardian character of its residential properties and their relationship to the Thames.

5. Sited on the corner of Elm Bank Road, and designated by the Council as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM), the appeal building is rich in architectural detailing, faced in brick with hipped roofs and gable projections, with a flat roofed single-storey element to the rear. Whilst of two to three storeys in the main, the appeal property has a central tower, principally faced in render with some decorative brickwork. I note that the appellants do not consider the

central tower to be a landmark, and that the Buildings of Townscape Merit Supplementary Planning Document (adopted May 2015) (the BTM SPD) and the Barnes Green Study do not make explicit reference to the tower; nevertheless due to its considerable height and contrasting elevational details it is an eye-catching and notable feature of the building, from which a considerable degree of its contribution to the wider Conservation Area derives.

6. The proposed development seeks wrap around extension of the property to first and second floor, over the existing flat-roofed single storey element along with alterations to the three storey rear projection.

7. The rear of the appeal property is readily visible from a number of viewpoints including parts of Barnes Bridge station, the public footpath to its side and from Elm Bank Gardens. I note that the detailing of the proposed development would not be out of kilter with its host building; however, the extensions would be of an excessive scale, depth and width and would be prominent additions, readily visible from public viewpoints, and dominant in the context of their host dwelling. This effect would be most marked along the north-east elevation where the proposed alterations at roof level, due to the depth of extension, height of the ridge, and removal of the more subservient roof form would obscure a considerable proportion of the tower eroding its prominence in this aspect, and would thus cause harm to the character and appearance of the BTM. In undermining the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the proposed development would also cause harm to the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area.

8. The proposed development's effects would be relatively localised, and thus in the context of the Conservation Area taken as a whole, the proposed development would comprise less than substantial harm for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, it does not follow that less than substantial weight should be attached to this harm in the overall planning balance and the Framework establishes that, at paragraph 134, "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimal viable use".

9. I have been supplied with no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would secure the optimum viable use of the building. I note that the proposed development would remove aspects of previous alterations that the appellants consider to be insensitive. However, as these elements of the building are much more subservient in scale than the proposed development I consider that their removal would only be a modest benefit, which thus carries only limited weight in favour of the scheme.

10. The proposed development could improve privacy for the appellants. This may be the case; however, this is a private benefit that only carries very limited weight. The appeal scheme could also avoid causing harmful effects to the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent properties; however, this is merely indicative of an absence of harm, rather than a positive benefit of the scheme so does not add weight to the arguments in favour of its approval. Similarly, that the appeal scheme would be acceptable in flood risk terms is a matter of neutral weight. Consequently, none of these matters either individually, or taken together demonstrably outweigh the harm the proposed

development would cause to the significance of the Conservation Area, a consideration to which I attach considerable weight and importance in the overall planning balance. Neither would these matters outweigh the harm caused to the BTM, a non-designated asset for the purposes of the Framework.

11. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of its host dwelling. Moreover, mindful of my duty arising from section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I consider that it would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Barnes Green Conservation Area. For these reasons also the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP7 of the Richmond-upon-Thames Core Strategy (adopted April 2009); Policies HD1, HD3 and DC1 of the Richmond-upon-Thames Development Management Plan (adopted November 2011); The BTM SPD, and the House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (adopted May 2015). Taken together, and amongst other matters, these policies and documents seek to ensure that new development respects the character and appearance of conservation areas and buildings of townscape merit.

Conclusion

12. The proposed development would thus conflict with the policies of the development plan insofar as they are relevant and have been drawn to my attention, and no material considerations outweigh this. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR