
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2017

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/16/3162709

599-627 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JD

- 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 Mrs Sarah Hughes against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref: 16/02578/FUL, dated 26 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is the creation of an attic conversion made up by a 70 degrees front mansard roof and the installation of new street-facing dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Wandsworth Road and Rectory Grove Conservation Areas and on the existing terrace of buildings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a long terrace of two storey, brick built, houses with shallow pitched, "butterfly", roofs concealed behind a front parapet. The architecture of the terrace is simple in form with little decoration save for simple doorcases and windows surrounds. The frontage of the terrace is largely unaltered with the exception of the brickwork having been painted on a number of the houses and the front garden areas being given over to car parking.
 4. The appeal site is within the Wandsworth Road Conservation Area which is linear in form, running along the main road and comprises of mainly Nineteenth Century terraced properties with some groupings of commercial uses interspersed with the residential buildings. On the north west side of Wandsworth Road, adjacent to but not within the conservation area, are a range of more modern houses and flats including two tower blocks. Adjoining the eastern boundary of the appeal site, the churchyard of St Paul's Church is within the Rectory Grove Conservation Area.
 5. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in making decisions on planning applications and appeals within a Conservation Area, special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area. Policies Q5 and Q11 of
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the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 (Local Plan) seek to ensure that new development maintains the local distinctiveness of the area, responds to positive aspects of the local context and historic character, and responds positively to the original architectural form of the development. Policy Q11 also states that roof additions and mansards will not be supported where they would harm the architectural integrity of the original building or its group.

6. Local Plan Policy Q22 requires that new development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas and respects and reinforces the established positive characteristics of the area.
7. The Lambeth Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (SPD), which has to be read alongside these more general design policies, provides detailed guidance on mansard roof extensions.
8. The proposed development would add a continuous mansard roof extension finished in zinc to the whole terrace. The SPD requires that new mansard roofs should be covered with natural or reconstituted slate. I saw when I visited the site that whilst there are other mansard roofs nearby, these are on buildings which are either recently built or later in date than those on the appeal site and that, uniformly, these were finished in slate. The use of zinc sheeting with a standing seam detail as shown on the submitted drawings would be inconsistent with the other mansard roofs in the area and as a result would be a discordant and alien feature. The addition of brick party walls which project above the roof line and the increased prominence of the heightened chimney stacks would significantly alter the built form of the terrace and would detract from its current simple and uncluttered appearance, which is in large part derived from its low overall height and the continuous horizontal parapet.
9. The proposal retains the rear gable walls of the butterfly roofs which would help to maintain the rhythm of the traditional rear roof form. However, the vertical, fully glazed, rear elevation of the proposed mansard roof would significantly increase the perceived height of the roof extension and, as a result, it would appear disproportionately large in comparison to the architectural features of the existing rear elevation of the terrace. Full height glazing of this type is not a feature of buildings within the conservation area and would be inconsistent with its character. Whilst the rear of the roof would not be visible from Wandsworth Road, the rear of the terrace is clearly visible from the churchyard to the rear and from the footway which links Rectory Grove to Wandsworth Road, both of which are within the adjoining Rectory Grove Conservation Area. This would have an adverse effect on views out of the Rectory Grove Conservation Area into the Wandsworth Road Conservation Area.
10. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation. The significance of the terrace of the buildings to which the appeal relates is summarised by the Council as the local historical and architectural significance of this type of development which pre-dates the later 19th Century acceleration from craft based methods of building to mass production within the building industry. Consequently, there are fewer surviving examples of this type of building, relative to those dating from the

post 1870 speculative housing boom. This assessment is not challenged by the appellant.

11. Although it is proposed to add the mansard roof extension to all of the houses in the terrace, its addition would fundamentally alter the appearance of the terrace which is characterised by its modest scale. This would be particularly apparent at the rear where the roof extension would appear disproportionately large. Whilst the use of contemporary roofing materials would clearly distinguish the new addition from the original fabric of the terrace, it would also emphasise the increased height and the inconsistency between the proposed mansard roof and the existing slate covered mansard roofs that exist elsewhere within the conservation area.
12. Whilst the resulting development would not exceed the height of the buildings to either side of it, the contrast in scale between the earlier dwellings of the terrace and the later buildings adjacent to it is an integral part of the significance of the terrace within the conservation area.
13. As a result of this, the significance of the terrace as a largely unaltered example of early suburban development in the area would be harmed. This would cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Whilst the proposal would have a material adverse effect on the character and appearance of the terrace of buildings, within the overall context of the conservation area this effect would not be so great as to amount to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area, although less than substantial harm would arise.
14. Paragraph 134 of the Framework requires that where a development proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use. The principal benefit that has been identified in the evidence is that the proposed mansard roof extension would provide additional living space for the residents, and I note that a number of representations in support of the appeal proposal have been made by other residents within the terrace.
15. The provision of additional accommodation is primarily a private as opposed to a public benefit, and there is no substantive evidence before me that the existing houses are not fit for purpose, provide substandard or inconveniently arranged accommodation, or require substantial refurbishment. Whilst there may be a limited public benefit in creating slightly larger properties within the local housing market, this would not overcome the great weight that must be given to the conservation of heritage assets.
16. My attention has been drawn to a recent approval for a mansard extension at number 681 Wandsworth Road. I saw during my site visit that this property is of a substantially different design to the appeal buildings and has a dual pitched roof rather than a butterfly roof. Therefore, I do not consider that it is directly comparable to the appeal proposal. My attention has also been drawn to a proposal for a five storey, mixed use, development on a site opposite the appeal site. I do not have the full details of this proposal and so cannot be certain of the circumstances which have led to this, or whether they are similar to the appeal proposal.

17. I therefore find that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the Wandsworth Road and Rectory Grove Conservation Areas and on the existing terrace of buildings. It would be contrary to the relevant requirements of Policies Q5, Q11 and Q22 of the Local Plan and the guidance in the SPD which seek to ensure that new development has regard to the local context and local distinctiveness, does not harm the architectural integrity of the existing buildings and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas.

Other matters

18. I have had regard to the fact that the Council has not raised concerns with regard to the effect of the development on the setting of the Listed Church to the rear of the appeal site or in respect to overlooking of, or loss of daylight to, other nearby properties. Additionally, I have noted that no objections were received from third parties to the proposal. I have also had regard to the maintenance requirements of the existing roofs on the houses in the terrace and the condition of the property at number 607 Wandsworth Road. However, none of these matters, either singly or cumulatively, leads me to a different conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

19. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR