The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 March 2017

by C L Humphrey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/D/16/3165770
15 St Peter's Grove, London W6 9AY

- 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 Emmanuelle Pradere against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.
- The application Ref 2016/02535/FUL, dated 2 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
- The development proposed is additional floor at roof level in the form of a mansard loft conversion.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St Peter's Square Conservation Area and the effect of the appeal proposal on the significance of the building of merit.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a modest 2 storey brown brick and slate mid-terraced house located on the east side of St Peter's Grove within the St Peter's Square Conservation Area (the Conservation Area) and identified on the Council's local register of buildings of merit.

4. The character of the Conservation Area is derived from the varied form of the predominantly residential development which stretches from King Street in the north to the river Thames in the south. The grand scale of development within St Peter's Square contrasts with the far more intimate scale of buildings along St Peter's Grove. There have been very few alterations and no extensions at roof level along the terrace within which the appeal property is located. As a result, the appeal property and terrace retain a strong and harmonious architectural form and rhythm which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

5. The front elevation and roof of the appeal property are clearly visible in views along St Peter's Grove. The rear of the appeal property is visible from the junction of King Street and Standish Road and from neighbouring properties on Standish Road to the east and the tower block to the north. The proposed development would be prominent from these vantage points.

6. The appeal proposal, by reason of the siting and considerable width, height and bulk of the mansard roof and dormers to the rear and the siting and scale of the rooflights to the front, would interrupt the roof line and would therefore detract from the composition and visual unity of the appeal property and the terrace as a whole. The proposed use of matching brick and slate materials, conservation style rooflight windows and traditional architecture would not ameliorate the harmful impact of the development.

7. There are other examples of mansard and dormer roof extensions in the surrounding area, which I observed during my site visit. I do not have details of their planning history, however, I noted that these mansards and dormers are generally situated on terraces of a greater scale than the terrace to which the appeal relates and often feature on most or all of those terraces. These other developments are therefore not directly comparable with the appeal proposal, and so I have afforded them only limited weight. They do not lead me to find the proposed development acceptable.

8. The lawfulness of installing rooflights within the appeal property is not for me to judge in the context of this appeal, and it is open to the appellant to seek a separate determination in that regard. The apparent absence of an Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights in respect of roof alterations is not in itself a reason to sanction the appeal proposal given the harm it would cause. The poor structural condition of the roof does not justify the harm that would result from the proposed development, particularly as there is no reason to believe this matter could not be resolved through more sympathetic means. Accordingly, I have given these matters little weight.

9. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St Peter's Square Conservation Area and would have a harmful effect on the significance of the building of merit. As such, it would conflict with the design, heritage conservation and protection aims of Policy BE1 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Core Strategy, Policies DM G3 and DM G7 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Development Management Local Plan, SPD Design Policies 21, 31 and 32 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework).

10. As set out in paragraph 132 of the Framework, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Any harm requires clear and convincing justification. In the parlance of the Framework, the identified harm to the designated heritage asset is less than substantial and should therefore be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The refurbishment of the appeal property and creation of additional family accommodation do not amount to a public benefit sufficient to outweigh the harm caused to the designated heritage asset.

Conclusion

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

CL Humphrey

INSPECTOR