
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by Darren Hendley BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3167524

Firdale, 192 Sheen Lane, East Sheen, London SW14 8LF

- 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 Eugenia Azevedo and Luc Naidoo against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 16/4093/FUL, dated 24 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 15th December 2016.
 - The development proposed is hip to gable loft extension with 2 no new dormers in lieu of existing one long dormer, replacement windows, rendering to external walls with improved insulation in parts, replacement rooflights to existing ground floor lean-to of detached property.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Sheen Lane Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a three storey detached house with a prominent tower feature cited centrally on its front elevation. The tower was added as a feature to the original property before Conservation Area designation. The roof of the property is hipped in form, as is the roof of the tower. The front elevation of the property also contains two storey bays that are positioned on each side of the tower. The property is set back from the frontage of the site with mature trees positioned to the side of its access, which also serves 192A Sheen Lane. A neighbouring commercial garage directly abuts its Sheen Lane frontage, whilst the house at no. 190 is positioned slightly forward of the appeal property.
 4. The East Sheen Village Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015) summarises the main characteristics of this part of the Conservation Area, describing that the cohesiveness of the area is provided by the linear feel of the buildings, with key focal buildings. I consider the property, by virtue of its tower feature, does contribute towards the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset. The tower also adds appreciably to the character and appearance of the property.
-

5. The hip to gable conversion would noticeably and unsympathetically alter the character and appearance of the property, with the loss of the current hipped form of the roof. The proposed gable ended roof form would considerably extend the narrow main roof pitch, add significantly to the bulk of the main roof and detract from the cohesiveness of the design of the existing roof with that of the tower. The proposed setting in of each gable end from the side walls of the property would, in my view, be imperceptible and would not overcome this harm. Moreover, the resultant increased bulk of the roof would detract from the prominence of the tower and bays as features of the property, and therefore detract from its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.
6. The Council has confirmed in its appeal submissions that the property is not defined as a Building of Townscape Quality. Nevertheless, as I have set out, the property does contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area.
7. The siting of the dwelling back from the site frontage and the positioning of neighbouring properties do not alter my views, as the access to the site between the trees would allow for clear visibility of the hip to gable conversion from Sheen Lane. Although there are examples of hip to gable conversions on other properties on this part of Sheen Lane, compared to the proposal, these are not directly comparable and, in any case, each proposal is treated on its own merits.
8. The proposed rear dormers, whilst individually pleasing in design, are integral to the hip to gable roof conversion, which I consider causes harm. The other aspects of the proposal would not detract from the contribution of the property to the significance of the Conservation Area. I note the Appellant no longer intends to render the property and would seek to replace the frames in the loft with those more in keeping with the property, although these details are not before me. These considerations do not though outweigh the harm I have identified arising from the hip to gable conversion.
9. I also note the Appellant's comments that the proposal would be normally allowed under permitted development rights if the site was not in a conservation area. More rigorous controls in conservation areas are however an acknowledgement that a broader range of development proposals need to be appraised in order to establish whether proposals do preserve or enhance character or appearance. The proposal ably demonstrates this point.
10. The statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is of considerable weight and importance. The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and this must attract considerable weight against the proposal. It would also fail to comply with policies CP 7 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (2009), and DM HD1 and DM DC1 of the LDF Development Management Plan (2011), which protect such areas from inappropriate development and require that development is compatible with local character. Similarly, I find the proposal does not comply with East Sheen Village Design Guidance SPD which seeks to conserve character.
11. I also consider the proposal fails to comply with the House Extensions and Alterations SPD (2015), which warns against hip to gable extensions for design

reasons. The hip to gable extension would detract from the character and appearance of the property, as I have outlined.

12. For the purposes of paragraphs 132 to 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Whilst I note the environmental and appearance improvements of new doors and windows, the use of higher quality materials, the living accommodation advantages that would arise from the hip to gable extension and the lack of objection from the occupier(s) of no. 192a, these are largely benefits to the appellants rather than having wider public benefits. I do not consider the public benefits that have been put forward would outweigh this harm.
13. I also note comments made about the Council's pre-application procedures, although this is not a matter for me to comment on in the context of this appeal.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and would cause less than substantial harm to significance of the designated asset that is not outweighed by public benefits. Accordingly, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Hendley

INSPECTOR