
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2017

by A Napier BA(Hons) MRTPI MIEMA CEnv

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

Decision date: 26 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/17/3170519
92 Eversleigh Road, London SW11 5XA

- 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 Jeanie Keyser against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/6639, dated 28 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is rear facing dormers with two front roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. From the evidence provided, the Council does not object to the proposed rooflights to the front elevation of the dwelling and there is nothing before me that would lead me to a different conclusion in this respect. As such, the primary area of dispute between the main parties concerns the proposed dormer windows and I intend to consider the appeal accordingly. The appeal site is located within the Shaftesbury Park Estate Conservation Area. This is a designated heritage asset and I am mindful of my statutory duties in this regard. The main issue in this appeal is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is located within a predominantly residential area, which is largely comprised of terraced rows of older two-storey houses. Most of these include distinctive brick detailing, many with ornate porches or decorative lintels. Whilst there is some variation between the dwellings, overall, there is a high degree of consistency in the design and appearance of the houses. From the evidence before me, I consider that the regular pattern of development and distinctive design of the dwellings are important elements that make a significant contribution to the character of the area.
 4. The appeal dwelling is located within a terrace of similar dwellings, adjacent to the corner property situated at the junction of Eversleigh Road with Grayshott Road. Whilst the adjacent corner property has a distinctly different roof design, the appeal dwelling follows the more usual approach within the streetscene, with a slate roof separated from the neighbouring roofs by parapet walls. These walls and the visually dominant chimneys produce a repeated pattern that punctuates the terraced roofscape and provides it with a regular
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rhythm and distinctive appearance. This roofscape is an important element within the streetscene, which makes a positive contribution to the visual amenities and character of the area.

5. I understand that several properties nearby have been altered to the rear and these include two-storey extensions, some of which are visible from the adjacent railway line. In addition, some roofs within the vicinity of the site include rooflights or other additions. However, with some exceptions, many roof slopes visible from the public highway are uninterrupted. Furthermore, although the form of the adjacent corner roof differs from that of the remainder of the terrace, the absence of intervention within its varying roof slopes results in it having a visually consistent appearance with the remainder of the terrace, enabling it to be perceived as an intrinsic part of the wider roofscape.
6. Although the proposed dormer windows would respect the existing fenestration in their width and alignment, they would materially alter the existing roof slope of the appeal dwelling. Whilst they would be located to the rear of the house, due to its location within the terrace, proximity to the nearby road junction and the pattern of surrounding development, this roof slope is clearly visible from Grayshott Road, close to its junction with Holden Street. Notwithstanding the screening that would occur from other directions, in this context and in the absence of similar visible interventions nearby, due to the form, design and siting of the proposed dormer windows, they would result in a prominent, incongruous and visually intrusive form of development, which would significantly and detrimentally disrupt the rhythm of the existing roofscape.
7. A number of other roof extensions within the area have been drawn to my attention. I do not have the full details of these other examples or the background to those decisions. Nonetheless, from the evidence available to me, I am not satisfied that these other examples are directly comparable to the appeal proposal in their visual prominence or their relationship to other development nearby and the streetscene. In any event, the existence of other development elsewhere does not represent an appropriate reason to allow a proposal that would cause harm.
8. Consequently, overall, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and, for the reasons given, would result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset. I give this considerable importance and weight. It would be contrary to the *Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document 2016* Policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5, where they collectively seek to protect local character and appearance, including in relation to the historic environment, and would not meet the similar aims in this regard of the Council's *Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2015*.
9. The proposal would not lead to the loss of the dwelling and would affect one site within a much larger Conservation Area. As such, I consider that, whilst material, the harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that, in the case of designated heritage assets, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
10. The main public benefits resulting from the scheme would be the provision of additional living accommodation, potentially enabling the more flexible use of a

dwelling situated within easy reach of a wide range of services and facilities, which would contribute to sustaining its residential use in the long-term. Given the nature and scale of the proposal, I consider that these benefits would be limited and there is nothing before me that leads me to consider that, in the absence of the proposal, the use of the dwelling would be at risk. Nonetheless, having regard to the general encouragement in the Framework for such development, I give them moderate weight.

11. Paragraph 132 of the Framework advises that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset in considering the impact of a proposal on its significance. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and, as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. In addition, paragraph 131 of the Framework refers to the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. For the above reasons, I consider that the development would not make such a contribution and, as such, whilst the use of the site as proposed may be viable, it would not represent its optimum use.
12. For these reasons, I find that the benefits of the proposal would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm identified to the significance of the heritage assets and the proposal would not meet the aims of paragraph 17 of the Framework, to achieve high quality design, take account of the different roles and character of different areas and conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Other matters

13. It is not a matter of contention between the main parties that the proposal would not result in detriment to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. However, the absence of harm in this respect would not address the harm identified above. Furthermore, for the reasons given and having regard to paragraphs 7-9 of the Framework, I consider that the proposal would not represent sustainable development and, on the evidence available to me, would not be in accordance with the development plan as a whole.
14. I understand that the proposal is a revised scheme that sought to address concerns previously raised by the local planning authority in relation to a materially different proposal. However, this does not lead me to alter my findings above.

Conclusion

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

A Napier

INSPECTOR