
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2017

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 07 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/W/16/3167447
93 Ricardo Street, London E14 6EQ

- 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 Mohammed Nizam Uddin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/16/01125, dated 2 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is dormer loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site at 93 Ricardo Street is within the Lansbury Conservation Area (CA). The Council's document entitled 'Lansbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines' (October 2007) describes the significance of the CA, which contains the first comprehensive post-war housing redevelopment in the east end of London. The character of the CA is therefore primarily informed by the underlying social philosophy of post-war planning, and the visual unity that derives from its having been developed within a short period of time during the second half of the 20th century.
 4. No 93 is located within a four storey block of residential units on the south side of Ricardo Street. The design of the block and its use of yellow stock bricks for the facades is typical of the area. The building as a whole appears to be little altered from its original design, and it thus makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA. The development would create additional accommodation within the loft, and would incorporate a new dormer window to the rear elevation.
 5. I accept that the development would match the existing building in terms of the proposed materials. However, a further unifying architectural feature of the CA is the plain roofscapes, which are largely unaltered, and reflect the original design approach within the area. No 93 is characterised by a pitched roof which is set behind low parapets. The proposed dormer would occupy a significant proportion of the roof, and would extend outwards at a height just
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below the ridgeline. Its box-like form would dominate the rear elevation, appearing neither sympathetic nor subsidiary to the modest scale and appearance of the existing property. It would also significantly disrupt the original form of the roofslope.

6. I accept that the rear roofslope of No 93 cannot readily be seen from public vantage points within the conservation area. However, I noted on my visit that the chimneys on the rear elevation of the block can be seen from the ground. The development would thus be seen in private views from the rear of the surrounding Grundy Street properties to the south. Notwithstanding this limited impact on the wider conservation area, I am of the view that the proposal would be materially harmful to the appearance of the existing property. Even when harm to an individual building may be small, cumulative and incremental changes of this kind can result in unacceptable harm to a heritage asset. In this case it could contribute to an erosion of the roofscapes that characterise the CA as a whole.
7. I appreciate that the development would allow for an increase in the size of the appeal property, which would be of benefit to the appellant's family. This private benefit would not outweigh the harm I have identified regarding the proposal. I am aware that legal issues have been raised in respect of the appellant's wish to develop the loft space, but this is a private matter between the relevant parties, and has not had a bearing on my decision.
8. My attention has been drawn to a planning permission¹ which has been granted at the appeal site for the conversion of the loft space with two rooflights to the rear roofslope. The appellant argues that this development would be similar in terms of its visual impact, but I disagree. Rooflights in this location would leave the original shape of the roof largely intact, and so would be less harmful to the character of the CA.
9. I have been referred to a planning permission² dating from 2004 for a dormer extension on a similar building. However, the full circumstances in which that proposal was found to be acceptable are not before me. The decision also predates the current local and national policies by some years. These factors limit the weight I can give to that permission, and in any event, each case is to be considered on its own merits. The appellant refers to other unnamed examples of loft conversions in the area. However, there is no compelling evidence before me to show that dormer windows of the type proposed are characteristic within the CA.
10. I therefore conclude that the development would unacceptably fail to preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area, and would thus conflict with Policy SP10 of the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy Development Plan Document (September 2010), which seeks to protect heritage assets, including conservation areas. I therefore find that the duty to preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area would not be satisfied.
11. Whilst the harm to the CA would be less than substantial (in terms of the phraseology used in the National Planning Policy Framework), this does not mean that the harm to the conservation area would not be significant. I have

¹ PA/16/01819

² PA/04/00835

not been made aware of any public benefits that would outweigh the harm to the CA that I have identified above.

12. For those reasons, and taking all other matters into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR