

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by D Guiver LLB(Hons) Solicitor

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

Decision date: 15 June 2017

Appeal A Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3170463

20 Waldegrave Gardens, Twickenham TW1 4PG

- 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 I Prain against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 16/3444/HOT, dated 19 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two-storey side extension with accommodation in the roof space together with a dormer window in the rear elevation and a new chimney to the roof, alterations to the front elevation to re-build the ground floor bay window and the creation of a new entrance door, relocation of the existing first floor window and the creation of a new second window opening, alterations to the rear elevation by replacing the existing double doors with a window in the closet wing, and increasing the height of part of the side boundary wall.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/L5810/D/17/3170424

20 Waldegrave Gardens, Twickenham TW1 4PG

- 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 I Prain against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 16/3393/HOT, dated 19 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of a two-storey side extension with accommodation in the roof space together with a dormer window in the rear elevation and a new chimney to the roof, alterations to the front elevation to re-build the ground floor bay window and the creation of a new entrance door, relocation of the existing first floor window and the creation of a new second window opening, and alterations to the rear elevation by replacing the existing double doors with a window in the closet wing.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Main Issues (Both appeals)

3. The effect of the proposed developments on the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and whether the proposed developments would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Strawberry Hill Conservation Area.
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Reasons

4. The appeal site is at the junction of Waldegrave Gardens and Tower Road, and comprises a large semi-detached house of late-Victorian construction with a substantial open garden to front, side and rear of the building. The site and its adjoining property are together one of four pairs of similar semi-detached properties, with each dwelling having a gable to the front and side elevations and a closet wing extending from the rear elevation. The front gables of the properties are immediately adjacent, creating an attractive double-gable. The appeal site and the adjoining property at 18 Waldegrave Gardens have wider garden plots than the three remaining pairs, which creates a significant space next to their respective side elevations.
5. The appeal site sits within the Strawberry Hill Conservation Area (the Conservation Area). As such I am mindful of my statutory duty, arising under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The Conservation Area was designated in 1988 and is quite tightly drawn, encompassing two adjoining tree-lined avenues, one of which is Waldegrave Gardens. The conservation area is characterised by substantial late Victorian houses set in generous garden plots. There is a strong sense of uniformity derived from the interesting architectural features and the use of common materials.

Appeal A

6. The proposed development subject to Appeal A would entail the construction of a significant extension in the garden space next to the side elevation. The front elevation of the extension would be a similar height and width to the existing front elevation and would sit flush with it. By reason of its height and scale the proposed development would be an overbearing addition to the host building and would clearly not be subordinate to it. This would represent a dominant addition at the side of the existing house which would disturb the balance of the semi-detached pair of which the appeal dwelling forms an integral part.
7. The proposal would have some benefits in terms of the introduction of a front door on the front elevation and the use of more sympathetic clay roof tiles. However these modest improvements would be at the expense of a harmful addition since the overall effect of the proposal would be to almost double the size of front elevation of the property. The existing front elevation double-gable would become three gables and would be in stark contrast to the three remaining pairs, disturbing the rhythm of this cohesive grouping. The disruption to the pattern of double gables by the addition of a third at the appeal site would also be an incongruous addition to the street scene and harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
8. I have had regard to other examples of side extensions in the vicinity of the appeal site. However some of these are not within the conservation area and more particularly, it is the disruption which would be caused to the composition of the semi-detached pair and the wider grouping of four semi-detached pairs that is harmful in this instance. The appellants state that a number of buildings have been built up to their boundary with the street and that this is a prevailing pattern in the area.

9. However, the buildings referred to reflect the character of the area of their construction. One building is a commercial building at the end of a row of commercial buildings abutting the road and two other are dwellings of some age where the road boundary is the original boundary of the building. The final building referred to is a block of new apartments built at the junction of Strawberry Hill Road and Tower Road. However, this building does not sit on the boundary and there are green spaces and hedges in front of the building where it abuts the road. The locations and construction of these buildings are not comparable with the appeal site and I therefore give them very little weight.
10. The appellants also refer to an extension built on the side elevation of the adjoining property at 18 Waldegrave Gardens. However, the extension at No 18 is narrower than the proposed developments subject to Appeals A and B and sits back behind the central roof line. As such the extension at No 18 is clearly subservient to the building. Moreover, because of the position No 18 occupies, the extension is not immediately visible. For these reasons I attach little weight to the presence of the extension at No 18.
11. The proposal would disturb the balance between the existing pair, erode the uniformity of the four pairs of dwellings and as such would have a detrimental effect upon the cohesion of this part of the Conservation Area. As such I conclude that it would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Appeal B

12. The proposed development subject to Appeal B would entail the construction of a significant extension in the garden space next to the side elevation. This extension would sit flush with the existing front elevation save for a ground-floor bay window projecting out from the building by a metre or so. The extension would be similar in height to the existing building but would not involve the creation of an additional front gable.
13. The existing side gable would be incorporated into the building but a similar side gable would be constructed as part of the new side elevation, which would not extend to the boundary. However, this proposed extension would introduce a pitched roof into a street scene where front elevations are characterised by double gables. By reason of height and scale the proposed development would be an overbearing addition to the host building and would clearly not be subordinate to it.
14. The disruption to the pattern of double gables by the intrusion of a pitched roof would also be an incongruous addition to the street scene and harmful to the character and appearance of the area. For similar reasons to those given above I conclude that the proposal would disturb the balance between the existing pair, erode the uniformity of the four pairs of dwellings and as such would have a detrimental effect upon the cohesion of this part of the Conservation Area. As such I conclude that it would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Final Conclusions- Both Appeals

15. In respect of both appeals the proposed developments would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and to the street scene on

Waldegrave Gardens. Therefore the proposed developments in both appeals would be contrary to Policies DC1 and HD3 of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames Development Management Plan 2011 (the Local Plan), and Policy CP7 of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames Core Strategy 2009 (the Core Strategy), which together seek to ensure that developments respect the character of existing buildings and areas.

16. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposed developments would both have a negative impact on the Conservation Area that would lead to less than substantial harm. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposed development. The appellants state that the proposed development would restore a number of original features to a significant building. The very modest effect of such a public benefit is significantly outweighed by the harm that would result from the proposed development. In this regard the proposed developments would be contrary to Policies HD1 and HD3 of the Local Plan and Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other matters, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

Daniel Guiver

INSPECTOR