
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 May 2017

by S Jones MA DipLP

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

Decision date: 3 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/17/3167958

4 Astoria Mansions, Streatham High Road, London SW16 1PS

- 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 Povey against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/05665/FUL, dated 24 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is replacement of existing windows and French doors with white PVCu framed double glazed windows and doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement of existing windows and doors with white PVCu framed double glazed windows and doors at 4 Astoria Mansions, Streatham High Road, London SW16 1PS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/05665/FUL, dated 24 October 2016 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Application Form; OS Map; Block Plan; Section 2500 Resi Doors; Second Floor Plan; Gracefield Gardens View Existing and Proposed; Whole Block Elevations Existing and Proposed; Existing Front Elevation; Proposed Front Elevation; Existing and Proposed Rear Elevation; Existing and Proposed Flank Elevation; Existing and Proposed Openings; Certified Installer; Technical Manual; Pictorial Elevations; Statement to justify UPVC; Retail Impact Statement; Method Statement plan numbers.
 - 3) The materials used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the host building and the surrounding Streatham High Road Streatham Hill Conservation Area (CA).
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Reasons

3. In determining this appeal, I have a statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990 to consider whether the proposal preserves or enhances the conservation area. In quotation from the Streatham High Road Streatham Hill Conservation Area description, it includes early to mid 20th Century retail and entertainment buildings alongside churches and residential mansion-blocks.
4. The property is an interwar brick built block of flats constructed contemporaneously with the adjoining Cinema, originally with thin metal framed white painted windows and doors identical throughout the building. The building is not listed, but lies within the CA on the busy Streatham High Road with bus shelters directly outside the building. It has a ground floor row of commercial premises, and Flat 4 is on the second floor.
5. I note that this property includes a further storey constructed more recently on the top floor of the building including PVCu, and it appears not reproducing original or white windows, such that there is already a degree of contrast within the frontage.
6. It is agreed that over time the majority of flats within the building have had replacement PVCu. On inspection the PVCu plain white windows that have been installed seem reasonably similar to the original windows still retained at Flat 4. Whether the other flats had obtained permission for those replacements is irrelevant in the context that the original frames have by now been effectively destroyed as a whole, and that part of the building's architectural integrity no longer exists.
7. Despite the changes to the roof and the loss of original windows, the building as a whole remains identifiable as a mid 20th century residential mansion-block in conjunction with the adjoining cinema entertainment building, and thereby contributes to the significance of the CA. Care has been taken in this particular proposal to replicate so far as possible the original windows and doors, including integrated glazing bars, and similar to existing replacements.
8. Consequently I conclude that the proposal does not fail to preserve or enhance the CA and that harm to its significance does not arise from one further set of windows being inserted into this particular frontage.
9. I note the Council's proper concern about local distinctiveness, architectural integrity and retaining appropriate detailing, design and fabrication in its up to date 2015 Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document on Building Extensions and Alterations (SPD) that will enable it to secure this going forward. I note that these policies appear consistent with the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework and the London Plan 2015, and I accord them significant weight.
10. However, I consider that the current context of this altered building, where these windows are not now in unity with the rest of the building, provides material considerations that outweigh those policies in this case, together with the fact that the proposed replacements will secure overall unity of window design to the flats, preferable noise reduction, thermal insulation rating and security in keeping with other windows in the building.

11. Whilst I attach significant weight to the 2015 Lambeth Local Plan Policies Q5, Q11 and Q22 and to the SPD which cross-references those policies, for the reasons outlined above I consider that this particular window in this particular building with its substantively altered roof form and fenestration does not have an unacceptable harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building either.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters, the appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted, subject to conditions that are necessary and relevant in the interest of certainty and to secure satisfactory appearance.

S Jones

INSPECTOR