The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2017

by G J Fort BA PGDip LLM MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K5600/D/17/3170254
6 Hereford Square, London SW7 4JT

- 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 Savills (UK) Ltd against the decision of The Council of The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.
- The application Ref PP/16/06925, dated 19 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2016.
- The development proposed is the removal of the existing two-storey roof addition and the erection of a replacement double mansard roof addition with associated alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the removal of the existing two-storey roof addition and the erection of a replacement double mansard roof addition with associated alterations at 6 Hereford Square, London SW7 4JT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PP/16/06925, dated 19 October 2016, 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: Site Plan 423(0)001; Proposed 3rd, 4th and Roof 423/PL(3)104 rev A; Proposed Front Elevation 423/AL(3)110 Rev B; Proposed Front & Rear Elevation 423/PL(3)111 Rev A; Proposed Side Elevation 423/AL(0)112 rev D; Proposed Section AA 423/PL(3)/120 rev A.

    3) The roof slopes of the extension hereby permitted shall be clad in natural slates and so maintained.

    4) The cheeks of the dormer windows hereby permitted shall be clad in lead and so maintained.

    5) The windows hereby permitted shall be timber framed, double hung, sliding sashes, and so maintained.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue in this appeal to be whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Queensgate Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Facing a pleasant, open and verdant landscaped square, the appeal property is part of a terrace of residential buildings of three storeys, with a mixture of characters, but similar in scale, proportion and the overall ratio of solid to void employed in their facades. The appeal building and its adjoining stucco faced properties, have richly detailed facades of a classical character, the rhythm and architectural integrity of which contribute considerably to the character and appearance of the Queensgate Conservation Area within which it resides. The significance of the Conservation Area derives, to a considerable degree from this consistent architectural character, and the relationship of its constituent buildings to its streets and open spaces. I saw buildings close to the appeal property appeared to have been extended at the roof level, including those immediately adjoining within the terrace. Moreover, the appeal property currently has a roof extension of a height in excess of those of its neighbouring properties, and a lopsided and asymmetric appearance at variance with their more regular forms.

4. The proposed development would remove the current extensions at the roof and replace them with a double-mansard of a similar overall scale, but extending across the full width of the property.

5. The proposed mansard would be set back from the front façade of its host building, and its lower roof slope would be of similar scale and angle to those in its adjoining terrace and the wider square. These measures would ensure that the proposed development would not dominate the host building's front façade, and would assimilate readily with other roof level alterations in its immediate surroundings.

6. The proposed development would replace the existing roof extension at the appeal property, which due to its prominent dormer window to the front that is considerably out of kilter with the fenestration pattern of the façade below, and the asymmetric nature of its roof design is an incongruous element within the streetscene. Whilst I note comments in the Officer Report that this existing roof extension may have been built without the benefit of planning consent, I have no substantive evidence before me to establish that it is not lawful in planning terms. Thus whilst I note that Policy CL8 of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Consolidated Local Plan (adopted July 2015) (the Local Plan) seeks to resist additional storeys and roof level alterations, as the proposed development would replace a structure comprising the same amount of storeys I can discern no conflict with this aspect of that policy.

7. Consequently, I consider that despite its scale, the more traditional form and symmetrical arrangement of the proposed development would be a marked and welcome contrast to the existing roof at the appeal property. Furthermore, the proposed extension's fenestration pattern would harmonise with that of its host building. As a consequence, the proposed development would constitute a considerable improvement to the roof extension currently present at the appeal building. Furthermore, whilst the proposed development would slightly increase the overall size of roof extension, it would not do so to an extent that would appear materially more dominant in any of the public views of the appeal building, and due to its more sensitive design would read as a clear improvement to the streetscene.

8. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and mindful of my duty arising from section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I conclude that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Queensgate Conservation Area.

9. For these reasons the proposed development would avoid causing harm to the Conservation Area's significance. As a result I consider that the proposed development would not conflict with Policies CL1, CL2, CL3, CL6, CL8, CL9 and CL11 of the Local Plan; or the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Taken together, and amongst other matters, these policies seek to ensure and that new development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas and sustains their significance; and that roof alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of their host buildings.

Conditions

10. I have assessed the conditions suggested by the Council against the tests given in paragraph 206 of the Framework. This states that they should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

11. In the interests of certainty, and to allow applications for minor material amendment, if necessary, I have attached a condition which specifies the approved plans. In the interests of the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area, I have attached conditions which specify the type of facing materials and window details to be employed in the proposed development.

Conclusion

12. The proposed development would not conflict with the development plan insofar as the policies that have been drawn to my attention are concerned. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

G J Fort

INSPECTOR