

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2017

by Caroline Mulloy BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/17/3172010
Heathcroft, Inwood Road, Hounslow TW3 1XH

- 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 Paul Riat against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00639/F/P4, dated 19 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of part single/part two storey rear extensions, part single side extension, conversion of garage into habitable room and roof extension to create one additional self-contained flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in the case are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property, surrounding area and the setting of the adjacent listed building; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of future occupiers with specific reference to outlook and external amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a detached two storey house, subdivided into two flats, with a hipped roof and an attached garage to the front. The surrounding area is predominately residential characterised by large detached dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site although semi-detached and terraced properties are also present in the street. The adjacent property to the south-west (No 117a) is a Grade II listed building.
 4. The existing building is set back from the established building line and is also lower in height than the adjacent properties. The hipped roof would be replaced with a mono-pitch roof to the front, with a flat roof behind and two side gables in place of the existing hips. The flat roof would not reflect the original character of the building or the majority of houses along the street and whilst it would be set behind the ridge it would, nevertheless, be visible by virtue of the gaps between the houses. The roof would also be visible from neighbouring gardens to the rear. The three storey rear addition would extend more than half the width of the rear elevation and there would also be a single storey extension. Consequently, the proposal would result in significant additions which would be disproportionate in scale to the existing building. First and second floor balconies would be stacked above the single storey extension and enclosed with privacy screens resulting in an overly complicated design. The
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character of the area is mixed and the existing property is smaller than its immediate neighbours and as such there is some scope to extend the property. However, I find that the proposal would fail to be subservient to the host property and lack a coherent architectural identity.

5. The façade of the grade II listed building at No 117a Inwood Road originally concealed a workshop behind which was not deemed to be of special interest. The building has recently been redeveloped by way of an extension to the roof and extensions to the rear, however, the detailed front façade and its wrap around was retained. The façade would be seen in the context of these rear additions when approaching from the south-west on the opposite side of Inwood Road. Due to the scale and incongruous nature of the extensions, I consider that they would visually compete with the listed building and detract from its setting. The proposal may provide some benefits in terms of the provision of a net additional residential unit and increased space for existing occupiers. However, whilst the harm arising from the proposal may be less than substantial, the public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the harm which I have identified.
6. The extensions and alterations at No 117a/117b were deemed to carry on the design of the façade and give the building a more consolidated form. The additional storey is set back from the main elevations, thus appearing subsidiary to the host property. Furthermore, flat roofs are consistent with the original Art Deco style. Overall, the additions to this property result in a building with a coherent architectural identity. This case is, therefore, not directly comparable to the appeal proposal which limits the weight which I can attach to it in my Decision.
7. Attention is also drawn to a numbers 90-92 Inwood Road which have been altered by way of a hip to gable end extension to the roof. However, no details of these cases have been provided and I cannot, therefore, be sure that they benefit from planning permission. In any event, none of these cases alter the harmful effects to character and appearance arising from the appeal proposal which I have identified.
8. For the reasons stated, I consider that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. Furthermore, it would fail to preserve or enhance the setting of the Grade II listed building to which I am required to have special regard and attention and to which the courts judge I am required to give considerable importance and weight. It would, therefore, be contrary to Policies CC1 and CC2 of the Hounslow Local Plan 2015 which together seek to ensure that new development is of a high quality urban design and architecture which preserves and enhances the special qualities and heritage of an area. Moreover, conflict arises with paragraphs 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Living conditions

9. The ground floor flat (Flat 1) would be dual aspect including the living/kitchen/diner which would also receive natural light from high level side windows in addition the front and rear windows. Bedroom one would be served by a main window in addition to a high level obscure window. However, bedroom three would have windows facing the car park area which would not afford a good outlook and occupiers may also be disturbed by the noise of cars arriving/leaving potentially late at night.
10. The living/kitchen/dining areas of Flats 2 and 3 would gain outlook from one window to the rear. It is not clear from the plans whether there would be an outlook from the proposed access to the balcony, however, a condition could be required to ensure that this is the case. However, the kitchen areas of Flats 2 and 3 would have

no outlook at all to the detriment of future occupiers. Bedrooms 1 and 2 of Flat 2 are single aspect; however, it would be unusual for bedrooms to be dual aspect.

11. Flat 3 would be in the roof space and would generally be single aspect. The bedroom would gain outlook from a window to the rear. The study would only be served by a roof light and would, therefore, have no outlook. Consequently, I consider that the occupiers of all 3 flats would have a poor outlook from at least some the rooms.
12. Policy SC5 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure the provision of sufficient private external space and that such space is useable and affords privacy in accordance with figure SC5.2. The proposal would meet the requirement of a minimum of 5m² of private outdoor space for each 1-2 person dwelling which can be provided in the form of usable balconies. No communal external space would be provided, however, in accordance with the Policy.
13. Flat 1 would have sole access to the rear garden and would, therefore, have access to external amenity space of a sufficient quality. The first and second floor flats would be served by side and rear balconies of 6.5m² which would meet the quantitative requirements in terms of floor space. However, the balconies would have high screens around, in order to avoid any potential overlooking issues and would thus have a poor outlook and light. Furthermore, the first floor balcony would also be enclosed by the floor above. For these reasons, I consider that the proposed balconies would provide poor quality external amenity space to the detriment of future occupiers.
14. Attention is drawn to the presence of local parks nearby which I agree might be considered to off-set the need for communal space, but not the need to provide private amenity space of a good quality. I note that the Council considered that the presence of nearby open space off-set the shortfall of open space provision in the adjacent development at No 117a/117b. However, I note in this case whilst the provision was below the requirement it was, nevertheless, useable and of a high quality. This case is not, therefore, directly comparable to the appeal proposal which limits the weight which I can attach to it in my Decision.
15. For the reasons stated, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the living conditions of future occupiers by virtue of poor outlook and poor quality external amenity space. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to Policy SC5 of the Local Plan.

Planning balance

16. The proposal would make a contribution, albeit limited, to housing supply in a sustainable location and may also have some economic benefits in the short-term during the construction phase. However, I have identified that there would be significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area and would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building. It would also have a harmful effect on the living conditions of future occupiers. The benefits would, therefore, be significantly outweighed by the harm which I have identified.

Conclusion

17. For the reason stated and taking all other considerations into account, the appeal should be dismissed.

Caroline Mulloy

Inspector