
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2017

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/17/3168506

5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 Cambridge Road, Twickenham TW1 2HN

- 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 Mrs Carol Unwin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref: 16/3809/FUL, dated 27 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is to replace the existing roofs with a mansard style structure to provide additional internal space as well as the external appearance and performance of the existing houses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The description of the appeal proposal used on the decision notice issued by the Council more clearly sets out the development proposed and I have, therefore, used a slightly shortened version of that for the purposes of the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal buildings are part of a longer terrace of mid-Twentieth Century two storey dwellings with a shallow pitched roof. The terrace comprises a continuous row of eleven dwellings with a further three dwellings set forward at its southern end. The terrace is situated well back from the carriageway of Cambridge Road in long gardens behind a high brick wall. Off-street parking areas are located next to the road, set amongst landscaping incorporating a number of mature trees. This gives the terrace as a group an individual character and the lower height of the terrace, combined with the set back from the highway, forms a visual counterpoint to the more formal architecture and built form in the rest of the street.
5. The east side of Cambridge Road, on which the appeal site is located, has a mixed architectural character with three storey mansion blocks at the north

end adjacent to a short terrace of two storey town houses with rooms in the roof space. Beyond the appeal site is a large block of modern flats and town houses, ranging from three to five storeys in height. The west side of the street is more uniform in character consisting of terraces of two storey houses with shared architectural features such as bay windows and front canopies which, together with the consistent ridge heights and building line, tie the slight variations in design into a cohesive whole. Throughout the street, roofs are either hipped or pitched and the architectural features of the buildings form repeating patterns with strong symmetry evident.

6. To the east of the appeal site, immediately to the rear, are a small group of two storey semi-detached houses of a similar age to the appeal buildings located between higher modern flats and facing over a public park adjoining the river Thames. To the west of Cambridge Road are parallel streets of large late Nineteenth or early Twentieth Century two storey semi-detached and terraced houses.
7. Taken together, Policy CP7 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009 (Core Strategy) and Policy DM DC 1 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Development Framework Development Management Plan 2011 (DMP) seek to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design that recognises and respects distinctive local character and the nature of the particular road on which it is located. Although they pre-date its publication, these policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to raise the standard of design and improve the character and quality of the areas where new development is proposed.
8. The appeal proposal would see a tall mansard roof finished in grey metal sheeting added to seven of the eleven properties in the longer part of the terrace. This would be offset, leaving one house at the north end of the terrace and three houses at the south end with the original shallow pitched roofs. I accept that the proposal would not result in the development being taller than the buildings to either side of the terrace and that the extensions to the party walls, which would project above the roof line, echo those on the dwellings opposite. However, due to the height of the proposed mansard roofs in comparison to the relatively low height of the houses and the shallow pitch of the existing roofs, these would appear as a disproportionately large addition to the existing houses. Moreover, the development would result in an awkward juxtaposition between the new flank walls and extended front façade on the extended houses and the remaining pitched roofs.
9. This would be exacerbated by the offset and asymmetric form of the new roofs on the terrace and the use of grey metal sheeting as a roof covering, which is not common within the surrounding area. Whilst I saw that the existing houses in the terrace have roofs finished in metal sheeting, this is contoured to resemble roof tiles and is visually more consistent with other roofs in the area.
10. The appellant suggests that the existing terrace is of no architectural merit or notable architectural style. Whilst it may not be as characterful as the mansion blocks at the north end of the street or the terraced houses opposite, the terrace that includes the appeal buildings does have a design consistency within itself and, as noted above, as a result of its layout and relationship to the surroundings it has a function in defining the overall character of the street.

11. This proposed mansard roofs would result in an incongruous feature within the street scene and would undermine the architectural integrity of the terrace and the role it plays in providing a visual contrast to the height and relationship to the highway of the other buildings in the street. This would not represent a high standard of design or respect the local character and nature of the road on which the appeal site is located. As such would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy CP7 and Policy DM DC1 of the DMP.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to other examples of mansard roofs in the wider area and I was able to see some of these when I visited the site. Although I accept that mansard roofs are present in the wider area, I note that these, and the other examples cited by the appellant, are all finished in hanging tiles and not metal sheeting. In general, they are also are not as large in proportion to the lower floors as the appeal proposal. Whilst the development at Northumberland Place does have a relatively large mansard roof on part of the development, this appears to have been part of the original design as opposed to a later addition to the building. I, therefore, do not consider that these provide a persuasive precedent for the appeal proposal.
13. I have also had regard to the appellant's points in respect of the condition of the existing roof and the potential to prevent the spread of fire through the roof voids. However, it is not essential that the development be carried out to address these matters, which could be remedied by other means.
14. The principal benefit that has been identified in the evidence is that the proposed mansard roof extension would provide additional living space for the residents. The provision of additional accommodation is primarily a private as opposed to a public benefit, and there is no substantive evidence before me that the existing houses are not fit for purpose, provide substandard or inconveniently arranged accommodation, or require substantial refurbishment. Whilst there may be a limited public benefit in creating slightly larger properties within the local housing stock, this does not, in my opinion, outweigh the harm that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of the area.
15. I note that three representations supporting the proposal have been made by third parties, albeit with the proviso that the development is carried out as a single project. I would agree with the concerns raised that if the development were not carried out as a whole, the harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area would be greater, and I also note that no mechanism is proposed that would ensure the construction of the scheme as a single project.
16. I therefore find that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would not comply with the relevant requirements of Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM DC 1 of the DMP which seek to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design that recognises and respects distinctive local character and the nature of the particular road on which it is located. It would also be inconsistent with the policies in the Framework which seek a high standard of design in all new development that improves the character and quality of the area within which it is located.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR