
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2017

by Katie McDonald MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/17/3174894

42 Putney Park Lane, London SW15 5HD

- 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 Elaine Starmer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/6006, dated 12 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is windows to front elevation, new front door.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The development is retrospective and I have considered the appeal on this basis.
3. I have used the Council's description of development as it is more concise than that given on the application form, with the exception of the word 'retention' and reference to the rear elevation. 'Retention' is not an act of development. Further, the Article 4 direction applies to the front of this property only, and as such, I have assessed the development with reference to the front elevation. These changes are reflected in the description of development.

Main Issue

4. Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Dover House Estate Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The site is a two storey mid-terrace residential dwelling, located within the Dover House Estate Conservation Area (CA). The significance of the conservation area is derived from the 'clusters of picturesque cottage-style homes and their front gardens with privet hedges set around green spaces with many mature trees'¹, influenced by the Garden City Movement. The area has a charming suburban character, and I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

¹ Dover House Estate Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2007)

6. The proposal seeks consent for replacement windows and a front door. The windows are white uPVC frames, and the door is wooden with stained glass to the upper panels.
7. The Dover House Estate Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2007) (CAA) details that within the CA there is a mixture of metal casement windows (commonly known by the manufacturer's name – Crittall), timber sash and casement windows. Every window, regardless of the material, originally had glazing bars dividing the glass area into small 'cottage style' panes, with original doors being timber panelled with glazing above.
8. The replacement uPVC frames are thick and chunky, occupying a greater proportion of the openings, particularly on the smaller windows. The Crittall windows have a very slender, delicate steel frame. This is not reflected in the replacement, which I find appear awkwardly clumsy in this prominent setting. Further, they do not feature the original 'cottage style' glazing bars, which is conspicuous, and as a result the windows lack character, appear quite modern and are incongruous. I note that the previous windows did not feature glazing bars. However, the CAA details that all windows were originally installed with the glazing bars, and as such any replacements should aim to preserve or enhance this recognised design feature of the CA.
9. The replacement door, whilst being timber, does not replicate the original door design. It appears at odds with other traditional doors in the area, due to its differing panel design, stained glass and lack of the upper 'cottage style' glazing detail. I find that it is an unsuitable replacement in this context.
10. Negative elements of the CA are evident, and the CAA details that small scale alterations have been most damaging where original windows have been unsuitably replaced. I did see a number of other dwellings that have replaced their original front doors and windows with uPVC or other materials, and some do not feature glazing bars. However, the Council detail that none of these have planning permission, and these insertions serve to confirm that they have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the conservation area, eroding its special and important qualities. These replacements do not provide justification to allow the proposal.
11. I find that both the windows and door fail to have regard to the character and appearance of the CA, which is reliant upon the uniformity of design features, and as such these insertions do not preserve or enhance the significance of the CA.
12. Consequently, I find that the proposal conflicts with Policy IS3 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Core Strategy (March 2016) and Policies DMS1, DMS2, DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (March 2016). These policies seek high quality development that protects and reinforces the existing varied character and heritage of the borough, sustaining and conserving heritage assets using appropriate materials. I also find conflict with the Housing Supplementary Planning Document (July 2015), the CAA and The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) regarding the protection of heritage assets and with the statutory duty.

Other Matters

13. The condition of the former windows and the benefit to living conditions from the development does not outweigh the harm that I have found to the CA.

Conclusion

14. The Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Although the harm to the CA would be less than substantial in this case, there are no public benefits that would outweigh the identified harm and I do not find that the proposal would be required to secure a sustainable future for the heritage asset.
15. Having had regard to all other matters raised, and for the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Katie McDonald

INSPECTOR