
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2017

by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/17/3177050
19 Clarence Road, Chiswick, London W4 3AS

- 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 Annabel Daley against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00268/19/P1, dated 26 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of the proposed development in the header above is taken from the original application form. The Council changed the description to, 'Erection of a rear roof extension with juliet balcony and three roof windows to front elevation and replacement windows to first floor rear elevation'.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the Wellesley Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. As the appeal site is located within a Conservation Area (CA), it is necessary to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also sets out that Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets and that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
5. The character and appearance of the CA is that of a Victorian suburb. This is reflected in the age and style of the appeal property which is a two storey house within a short terrace of four dwellings. It appears that the adjoining end of terrace house, No 17, has been modified by a hip to gable extension and incorporates a large rear dormer. No 21, the neighbouring mid-terrace house also has a large rear dormer extension.
6. The rear roof forms to these three properties are not visible from Clarence Road and there is only a glimpsed oblique view from Wellesley Road to the

south. However, they prominently form part of the backdrop to the Haining Close street scene located to the east, just outside the CA.

7. Section 8.0 of the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines 2003 (SPD) specifies that in CAs rear dormers should be 'of modest size and not dominate the roof. As a rule they should be no more than half the width (i.e. from party wall to party wall) of the original roof, set down 1m from the ridge and 1m above the eaves. A central position is usually preferable and the extension should reflect the design of the original building'. The 'Guiding principles' of the Wellesley Road CA Appraisal Statement also states that large dormers should be avoided. The SPD and the Appraisal post-date the neighbouring large dormers.
8. The proposal would not be set in from the boundary with No 21. It would only be set in by 0.3m from the boundary with No 17 and be 0.3m above the eaves. Its size and positioning would therefore not accord with the SPD. However, as emphasised by the appellant, the SPD is guidance and regard should be had to the existing context of the neighbouring dormers and the development plan policies. In particular, Policy SC7 of the Council's Local Plan 2015 (LP) sets out that development proposals should harmonise with adjoining properties and respect the surrounding established context.
9. The dormer at No 17 is set back from the boundary by around 0.3m and so the proposal would result in harmony with the end of terrace house. However, the dormer at No 21 is set back from the boundary on both sides. As a result, the proposal would appear bulkier and unbalanced with the roof form of the more closely associated adjoining mid-terrace house.
10. Prior to issuing its decision, the Council informed the appellant that the scheme would be refused permission unless amended plans were received which set the dormer in by 1m from the boundary with No 17 and the number of proposed front roof windows was reduced from three to two.
11. It is not for this appeal decision to appraise the Council's suggested amendment to the proposed dormer. Moreover, as it remains officer advice which may be subject to change, it does not represent a comparable fallback position in the same manner as a planning permission.
12. The appellant is critical of the Council's suggestion, being of the opinion that it would result in a lopsided addition to the roof that would be contrary to the SPD's preference for dormers to be centrally positioned. However, it is evident that the same criticisms may be levelled at the proposed scheme.
13. In summary, whilst strict adherence to the set backs and proportions stated in the SPD would not reflect the existing context of the site, the excessive scale and bulk of the proposed dormer would nevertheless be harmful to the character and appearance of the building and it would fail to harmonise with the more closely associated adjoining property. The appellant's aspiration to generate a more consistent form to the group of houses would therefore not be achieved.
14. With regard to the front elevation, the three additional windows would be set high on the roof slope and be regularly sized and spaced on a horizontal alignment. The proposal would compare with the two evenly sized windows at No 17 and the three unevenly sized and haphazardly positioned windows at No

21. Section 8.0 of the SPD specifies that in some situations a single small roof light may be acceptable.
15. As demonstrated by No 21, three windows would result in a cluttered appearance that would detract from the original simple roof form of the property. The appellant has confirmed an acceptance to reduce the number of roof lights at the front from three to two. A revised proposed front elevation plan has been submitted which shows two roof lights that would align with the first floor windows beneath, (Plan ref: 527-P1.114(ii)-B).
16. Notwithstanding what may otherwise be implemented using permitted development rights, such a revision would ensure that the appeal proposal respects the character of the host building and the wider area. Had the proposed development been acceptable in all other respects, the approval of the revised plan could have been specified by condition.
17. Paragraph 134 of the Framework sets out that where a development leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, as applies in this case, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development. A benefit of the proposed scheme would be the provision of additional living accommodation, including two additional bedrooms with the second bedroom derived from internal alterations to the existing first floor layout. There would also be investment in the fabric and condition of the building. Nevertheless, it is considered that these benefits do not outweigh the identified harm.
18. It is therefore concluded that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the Wellesley Road Conservation Area. It would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. It would conflict with Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC7 of the LP. Amongst other things, these policies also seek to ensure that all new development conserves and takes opportunities to enhance the special qualities and heritage of the distinctive areas of the borough.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

C J Ford

APPOINTED PERSON