
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 August 2017

by Louise Nurser BA (Hons) Dip UP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/D/17/3179276
54 Maids Causeway, Cambridge CB5 8DD

- 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 & Mrs Ben Clarke against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 17/0336/FUL, dated 22 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is roof extension incorporating rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

1. The main issue in this case is whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Kite Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

2. From what I have read and observed, I consider that a significant aspect of both the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area derives from the terraces of residential properties which, for the most part, are constructed of gault brick with slate roofs. The former coach houses fronting Salmon Lane and the rear of the properties fronting Maids Causeway, including the grey slate roofs form an important vista into the CA when viewed from the Grafton Centre car park.
3. I was aware from my site visit there is neither uniformity in the height of the properties along Maids Causeway, nor in the roofscape which reflects the historic development of the housing. Nonetheless, whilst a number of the properties include dormers at the rear, these are for the most part small and appear to be subservient to the pitched or mansard roofs. Where there are instances of more box like dormers these are substantively smaller than that proposed. The appeal proposal would not extend across the whole width of the roof, nor raise the ridgeline, but would project from the ridge outwards at a slight angle. I also note the proposal to utilise lead to soften the dormer's appearance.
4. Nonetheless, the dormer which would be set back from the gable to retain the integrity of the chimney, would almost extend to the boundary with no 56, and

whilst it would retain a gap to the eaves, would cover the majority of the roof plane. Consequently, the majority of the original roof would be covered by a box like dormer. The scale and massing, which would appear to dominate the roof, would be contrary to the guidance within the Roof Extensions Design Guide April 2003. Combined with the strong vertical emphasis of the fenestration, it would appear alien in the roofscape.

5. At my site visit, I was aware that the leaves of a large deciduous tree in the grounds of 64 Maids Causeway partially screen the appeal property. However, in winter this would not be the case, and when viewed from different vantage points the proposed development would be highly visible.
6. Consequently, the proposed dormer would result in an overly dominant and discordant development. It would neither faithfully reflect its context, nor provide a successful contrast to the original host property and would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This would be both contrary to policies 3/14 and 4/11 of the Cambridge Local Plan and contrary to the provisions of the Framework.
7. As such, I am of the view that the harm caused by the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
8. I have been referred to a number of examples of dormer extensions which have been allowed by the Council within Conservation Areas, including one which was visible from Fitzwilliam College playing fields. However, I am not familiar with the individual details of each case, including the extent of their visibility from the public realm. Moreover, I have considered the appeal on the basis of the individual merits of the case before me.
9. I understand that the appellant wishes to be able to provide additional living space for his family. Moreover, in determining this appeal I have been mindful of Paragraph 134 of the Framework, that where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including its optimum viable use.
10. Whilst there are clearly private benefits to the proposed development there is nothing before me to suggest that it would provide a public benefit, which would outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to both the Framework and the development plan as a whole.

Conclusion

11. The Framework is clear that the specific policies relating to designated heritage assets must be satisfied. As set out above I have concluded that the proposal does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole. Therefore the proposed development would not be sustainable development. Consequently I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L. Nurser

INSPECTOR