
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2017

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA

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

Decision date: 04 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/17/3177702
39 Oxford Road, London, SW15 2LH

- 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 Manthiar Tizzano against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2017/0882, dated 14 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is alterations at roof level including enlargement of existing dormer.
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Procedural Matter

1. The description of development varies between the application and appeal forms and the Council's Decision Notice. In the interests of brevity and accuracy I have used, a slightly amended version of, the Council's description.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area; including whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Oxford Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, No. 39 Oxford Road, is a large two-storey detached dwelling which occupies a corner plot at the junction with Disraeli Road. The property has existing front and rear dormer windows which are highly visible from the road; particularly the front dormer (north elevation) and the eastern side elevation of the rear dormer.
5. The property sits within the Oxford Road Conservation Area (CA) which is characterised by fairly large properties with a variety of designs but all with a similarly traditional character and appearance. The CA is a "heritage asset" as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seeks to ensure that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to

the significance of an asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits.

6. The proposal is to replace the existing roof and enlarge the existing asymmetrical rear dormer such that it would be symmetrical. The proposed dormer would cover a large proportion of the rear roof slope and, as it does presently, would sit above the ridge of the host dwelling. Following these alterations the western side elevation of the rear dormer would also be prominent in views from the street.
7. The proposed dormer alterations would lead to an excessively large structure which would appear as a bulky and inappropriate addition to the host dwelling. Whilst I note that the existing dormers have already altered the character and appearance of the dwelling, I consider that the proposed scheme would lead to the dormers becoming even more prominent and further detracting from the character and appearance of the dwelling.
8. I note the alterations would lead to a more symmetrical dormer window and would assist with balancing the appearance of the property. I also acknowledge the use of matching materials to ensure that the proposal would better integrate with its surroundings. However, these factors would not satisfactorily mitigate the harm I have identified.
9. The appeal site exhibits a number of characteristics which typify the special character of the CA which, according to the Conservation Area Appraisal is derived principally from the variety of high quality houses. Whilst the existing dormer windows have already had an impact on the role played by the host dwelling in respect of this significance; No. 39 nevertheless, continues to make a positive contribution. In my view, the proposal would further erode the quality of the host dwelling and reduce its contribution to the significance of the CA.
10. Thus, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
11. Due to the small scale of the development it causes "less than substantial harm" to the significance of the heritage asset, but that harm is still sufficient to carry considerable weight against the appeal. There are no identified public benefits which would outweigh the harm I have identified.
12. For these reasons, the proposal would fail to conform with Policy DMS 1 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document, March 2016 (DMPD) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that dormer windows are confined to the rear of buildings but, where they are visible from any public place, are sympathetic to the style of the building, not visually intrusive and do not harm either the street scene or the building's appearance. The proposal would also be at odds with Policy DMH 5 of the DMPD which requires development to have a high level of physical integration with its surroundings and contribute positively to local spatial character.
13. The proposal would also be in conflict with Policy DMS 2 of the DMPD which states that applications will be granted where they sustain, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of heritage assets.

14. The proposal would also fail to meet the guidance set out within the 2015 Wandsworth Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document Housing (SPD) which states that any alterations to the roof of a house in a CA should preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of that particular area.
15. I note the appellant's suggestion that the existing roof is beyond repair, leaks water and is not properly insulated and the replacement offers improvements and benefits. However, I see no reason why these benefits could not be achieved through a more sympathetic scheme. I find nothing sufficiently compelling to alter my conclusion that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
16. Having regard to my conclusions on the main issue and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J O'Brien

APPOINTED PERSON