
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 5th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/17/3174532

31 Baly House, 39 Palace Road, London SW2 3EG

- 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 Ms Georgia Ogunyomi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/06245/FUL, dated 31 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is windows and doors replacement.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the building.

Reasons

3. The flat in which the replacement windows are proposed is part of a 4-storey block set out in a staggered terrace form, and described by the Council as part of the Palace Road Estate, built by the Greater London Council in the mid-1970s. The blocks are similar in form and footprint. The arrangements of the openings in their facades, as well as the detailing and materials of the doors and windows, share a uniform, repeated pattern. This architectural and landscape coherence underpins the distinctiveness of the Estate and makes it an attractive environment.
 4. The plain replacement windows would follow the existing pattern in the plain openings. However, the other openings contain a distinctive arrangement of transoms, which is also reflected in the vast majority of the other flats, including the flat next door. The replacements for these openings would break from the established pattern of transoms and mullions and conflict visually with the fenestration of neighbouring flats within the block. The effect would be to undermine the architectural integrity of the building and to weaken its contribution to the townscape of the rest of the Estate.
 5. The Council has adopted design guidance in its Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2015. This advises, in section 2.6, that where a building is part of a terrace or group which shares common window detailing, it is especially important that new windows match the originals.
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6. The Council have raised no objection to the uPVC material proposed, but are concerned that the replacement windows would not reflect the frame dimensions and detailing of the existing. I saw that the openings in a limited number of the other flats in the block contain uPVC windows and doors, but note that they follow the established pattern of fenestration. However, without any details of the components of the proposed windows and doors, I am unable to conclude on this aspect of the proposal.
7. The replacement windows and doors may overcome the problems of draughts and improve the thermal efficiency of the existing openings and thereby improve the living conditions for the occupiers of the flat. However, much the same advantages could be secured by more sensitively designed replacement windows. These advantages are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the appearance of the building.
8. The appellant points out that the windows and doors of other flats in this building and in neighbouring blocks have been replaced. However, the instances where replacements have broken from the established fenestration pattern are very limited. They do not justify this proposal, especially given the design of the buildings whose architectural integrity relies on the coherence across the openings in their facades.
9. For the reasons set out above, the proposed development would be harmful to the appearance of the building and to its architectural character. It would conflict with policies Q5 and Q11 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2015) which seek to sustain local distinctiveness by ensuring alterations respond positively to the original detailing and fenestration of the host building and to the group characteristics of buildings, including design, materials and means of opening. It would be at odds too with the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out that development should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings.
10. The benefits of the development would not be outweighed by the harm it would cause to the character and appearance of the building. It would be in clear conflict with the policies in the Development Plan.

Conclusion

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

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR