



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2017

by Andy Harwood CMS MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A5840/W/17/3179808
88-89 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HA

- 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 Rosemount Investments Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Southwark.
 - The application Ref 16/AP/4794, dated 24 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a roof extension to create a duplex 2 bedroom apartment.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and whether the setting of nearby listed buildings would be preserved.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within a busy part of London on the approach to Blackfriars Bridge. The site is in a prominent corner position where Ufford Street joins Blackfriars Road and a rear lane runs along the backs of the properties that front onto the main road. The existing building was shrouded at the time of my visit with building works being undertaken although I have been provided with details of the building.
4. The existing building is at the end of a terrace of buildings that fronts onto the west side of Blackfriars Road. The terrace has a strong horizontal and vertical rhythm with traditional proportions with a number within the group (Nos 85, 86, 83, 82 and 81) being listed buildings. A parapet runs along the terrace and is a strong feature of it, albeit that there are some higher level roof extensions behind but which do not impose upon the street-scene being set back. The buildings within the terrace are constructed of brick of varied hues but the listed buildings generally have a substantial degree of traditional detailing.
5. The building at the appeal site includes a front element that follows the proportions and rhythm of the adjoining terrace but with a higher element behind, set back from the road. The building has much plainer detailing and a more modern looking brick than the more traditional buildings within the terrace. The building does not compete visually however with the terrace or therefore the listed buildings. In terms of the views of the terrace from

Blackfriars Road and the information provided, the retained original qualities of the listed buildings and the visual cohesion of the terrace which is part of the setting, are the significant elements of these heritage assets. The building steps down towards the rear lane where the townscape including the rear views of the listed buildings appears far less ordered and includes the functional rear service areas. The site is at a significant distance from the nearest Conservation Area to the south and has little influence over the setting of it.

6. On the opposite corner to the south of Ufford Street, there is an empty site screened off with temporary fencing and then, further again to the south the buildings are generally higher and more modern. On the opposite side of Blackfriars Road there is a very large modern residential, multi-storey block. Alongside that to the south is the Sons of Temperance Friendly Society a listed building which stands alone with robust separation from the appeal site provided by the distance and activity along Blackfriars Road. The appeal site does not contribute substantially to the setting of this listed building or therefore the visual significance of that heritage asset.
7. The previously approved scheme would result in an extension at roof level. The current proposal would however involve a much higher extension in the form of a large block that would be clad in glazing therefore contrasting significantly with materials, style and general strong uniformity of the rest of the terrace that is important to their setting and therefore their significance. The structure would stand up well above the roofline of the terrace and although it would be set back from the front elevation, given its height it would be prominently viewed from street level and from surrounding buildings. Substantial street trees would interfere with views of the structure but it would still look incongruous with the other buildings along the terrace when viewed from Blackfriars Road. From the rear, the extension would have a less significant impact alongside the more functional, less coherent rear facing roofscape.
8. The submitted drawings show the proposals in the context of a proposed high building that is proposed for the opposite corner of Ufford Street. The extension would produce a step-up to that much higher building. However, the building does not exist at the moment and I have no evidence to indicate whether or not that is likely to be constructed. I give that possible future development little weight in my decision.
9. Overall, although there is some variety to the heights of buildings nearby and the contemporary glazed 'crystalline box' approach has been used elsewhere, on this terrace the extension would look out of place and in stark contrast to the overall simple qualities of the terrace which includes the listed buildings. The proposed height and design would not be appropriate in the surrounding context or in relation to the nearby listed buildings.
10. In relation to the main issue, the proposal would have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the area and the setting of nearby listed buildings would not be preserved which would adversely affect the significance of those heritage assets. This would not comply with Core Strategy¹ Strategic Policy 12 and Southwark Plan² Policies 3.12, 3.13 and 3.18.
11. The appeal site is significantly separated from the Conservation Area to the

¹ Southwark Council Core Strategy, April 2011

² The Southwark Plan, 2007

south and also other listed buildings such as the Sons of Temperance Friendly Society building. The proposal would preserve the setting of those designated heritage assets, not impacting upon the significance of them. This is a neutral matter in the overall balance.

12. A better standard of residential accommodation would be produced. However this has only limited weight and does not provide public benefits sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed buildings, the balance required by paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andy Harwood

INSPECTOR