



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2019

by A Thompson BSc BTP MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/3226038

42 Ailsa Road, Twickenham, TW1 1QW

- 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 Iben Thomson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 19/0256/HOT, dated 24 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is single-storey rear extension and part first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have amended the description of development set out in the banner heading above to align with the description in the Council's decision notice, which was subsequently adopted by the appellant in their appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the development on: the character and appearance of 42 Ailsa Road (the host building); views of the Pleasure Gardens of St Margaret's Estate (the estate); and the character and appearance of the St Margaret's Estate Conservation Area (the conservation area).

Reasons

4. The conservation area appraisal statement¹ identifies the grouping of the dwelling plots in the estate, around three private Pleasure Gardens, as an important element of the distinctive character of the conservation area. It is also stated that... "*The sense of spaciousness is quite evident with the gaps between each house having a particular significance to the entire group, allowing glimpses of the gardens behind the houses.*". The Pleasure Gardens are also designated as areas of Other Open Land of Townscape Importance.
5. The proposed first floor side extension of the host building would substantially reduce the size of the open gap between the host property and the next door property, No.40 Ailsa Road. At present, there is a clear view of what one neighbour rightly described as a "magnificent" mature tree in the back garden

¹ St Margaret's Estate Conservation Area 19 Character Statement (undated)

- of the host property. In addition, there are glimpses of the mature trees in that part of the Pleasure Gardens that adjoins the rear garden.
6. The first floor side extension would demonstrably reduce the scale of the view of the mature tree and the Pleasure Gardens that is currently available between the host building and No.40. The reduction in the scale of the gap and the impact on views of the gardens behind the houses would therefore harm a feature of particular significance to the conservation area.
 7. Furthermore, although well set back from the front elevation of the host building, the first floor side extension would have a blank façade facing Ailsa Road. This element of the proposal would not integrate well with the existing building and would detract from the character and appearance of the host building. However, had I been minded to allow the appeal, it may have been possible to address this concern by canvassing the imposition of a condition requiring the provision of a window of sympathetic style and scale on this elevation.
 8. The scale and massing of the ground floor rear extension would not, in my view, materially harm the character and appearance of either the host building or the conservation area, although I share the Council's reservations about the proposed pattern of fenestration, particularly in relation to the side elevation facing No 44. However, as this element of the scheme is fully integrated into the overall proposals, I propose to consider the scheme as a whole.
 9. I note that the scale of gaps between individual properties along Ailsa Road, and between dwellings on other roads in the estate, varies considerably. Some properties appear to have been extended in ways that could have reduced the gaps between properties, but I have no substantive evidence on this point. There is also a much larger gap between the host property and No.44 Ailsa Road, which would be unaffected by the proposed development and which provides views through to the rear garden and Pleasure Gardens beyond.
 10. However, as the appraisal statement makes clear, it is the gap between each house that has particular significance to the area as a whole. Having regard to the reduction in the scale of gap and the special attention that must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, I find that the proposed development would cause harm to its character and appearance.
 11. The harm to the conservation area would be less than substantial, yet there are no public benefits identified that outweigh that harm. Furthermore, without modification of the blank façade, the development would also harm the character and appearance of the host property. The marked reduction in the gap between buildings would also adversely impact on views into and out of the Pleasure Gardens.
 12. In conclusion, I find that the development would harm the character and appearance of the host building, views of the Pleasure Gardens of St Margaret's Estate and the character and appearance of the conservation area. Accordingly, the development would conflict with policies LP1, LP3 and LP14 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan (2018) in so far as these policies seek to encourage good design and protect or enhance areas of acknowledged heritage and open space importance.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

Anthony Thompson

INSPECTOR