



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2019

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/W/19/3226779

105 St George's Drive, London SW1V 4DA

- 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 105 St George's Drive Freehold and Management Company Limited against the decision of the City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref: 18/09915/FUL, dated 20 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of rear extensions at ground, first, second and third floor levels; creation of terrace at lower second floor level to rear; erection of dormer; changes to fenestration and associated external alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the Pimlico Conservation Area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. No 105 St George's Drive is a mid-terrace Victorian property which is subdivided into 5 flats. The property forms part of a long terrace which is of a classical style, reflective of the area and forms part of the Pimlico Conservation Area.
4. Analysis by the appellant sets out the position for each building in the terrace in terms of the original form and subsequent alterations to the rear elevation, this is not disputed by the Council. The appellant indicates that only 7 out of the 16 buildings originally had the characteristic closet wing outrigger. Nevertheless, No 105 is located within the middle of a group (Nos 99- 111 odd St George's Drive) which are of a medium depth plan and have an outrigger. Additionally, the properties to the rear in Cambridge Street exhibit this form. I accept that there is variation in terms of infilling of the lightwell and extensions to the outriggers, however the individual properties generally display a rhythm and consistency in terms of form and detailing.
5. City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan (UDP) saved policy DES 5 allows for extensions and alterations where they do not visually dominate, are in scale with its immediate surroundings and reflect the style, details and materials of its surroundings.

6. The proposed development would rise above the penultimate storey in conflict with UDP saved policy DES 5 (B) (1). The infilling comprises more than two storeys, and the conservatory style elements would be above the ground level contrary to guidance in The Pimlico Design Guide¹. At the roof level the mansard roof composition with dormer windows is reflective of the terrace. The insertion of a further dormer window which would extend across the width of the roof would break the unity of the established roof form contrary to UDP policy DES 6.
7. The proposed extension would infill the majority of the lightwell which would add significant bulk and change the character and form of the rear façade. It would not breach the existing building line and would generally follow the stepped form of the neighbouring property, although that is the outrigger to No 107 St George's Drive rather than the infill. The alterations would introduce a range of elements which collectively would create a visually busy façade emphasised by the glazed infilling and extensive provisions at roof level. The development would, in my view, result in a form that is incongruous with the property and the wider terrace.
8. I acknowledge that the various policy requirements and guidance are to be applied flexibly, however, I find together the alterations would be detrimental to the composition of the rear façade. The development would conflict with UDP policies DES 5 and DES 6, and the Pimlico Design Guide which aim to ensure that extensions respect the surroundings, together with design policies, Westminster City Plan² policy S28 and UDP DES 1 which supports exemplary design which respects and enhances the character of the city.

Conservation Area

9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area.
10. The area is characterised by squares and terraces of large stucco properties. Whilst the appellant seeks to distinguish the rear of property and terrace from the traditional form in the area, the Pimlico Design Guide explains that "*most buildings in the Pimlico Conservation Area were built with projecting extensions at the rear. The width of these projections is generally less than half the width of the property*" which No 105 reflects.
11. As set out above, I find the alterations would adversely impact on the host property. The extent of the development would consume the original form and the resultant features would have a level of prominence, which I agree with the Council, would be out of keeping with the architectural character of the building and terrace group, and detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.
12. I appreciate that the rear of the property would not be viewed from the street, but it would be apparent from numerous surrounding properties, which have views from windows and terraces at various levels. Supporting text to UDP policy DES9, paragraph 10.115, explains that views from surrounding buildings and other non-street level views may be important. Due to the juxtaposition of

¹ THE PIMLICO DESIGN GUIDE -A Guide to the Alteration of Buildings in the Pimlico Conservation Area

² Westminster City Plan -Consolidated with all changes since November 2013, Revision to Westminster's City Plan November 2016.

the buildings an enclosed quiet enclave is formed to the rear. Whilst there have been various alterations, including infilling above lower levels at No 103 and No 111, the original form is generally still apparent. In contrast, I find that the scale of the proposed development, including the glazed infill which would exceed the height of the outrigger, would disrupt the existing character and rhythm of this part of the terrace.

13. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework the harm would be less than substantial and should be weighed against any public benefits arising from the proposal. The appellant suggests that the alterations would tidy up the building and improve the outlook from properties surrounding the site. I acknowledge that the replacement of existing non-traditional windows would be an enhancement, however, overall, I do not find that the appearance of the property is such that it necessitates a need to be tidied in terms of the building form. The alterations would increase the projected form and the extent of windows to the building. Whilst this would not result in a loss of privacy, it would not in my view improve the outlook for the neighbours. The development would enhance the living conditions for the occupiers of the flats, but this is an aspect which is of private benefit. Therefore, there are no public benefits identified that would outweigh the harm I have identified. This is a matter to which I give considerable importance and weight.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area and which would not be outweighed by public benefits. Thus, I find the development would be contrary to UDP policy DES 9 and Westminster City Plan policy S25 which seek to conserve Westminster's heritage assets.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR