



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2019

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/19/3225464

Flat 1, 10 Priory Grove, London SW8 2PH

- 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 Mr Joe Palmer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 18/04849/FUL, dated 6 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single storey side extension and required works to existing roof terrace.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Joe Palmer against the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matter

3. The proposed development was refused by the Council for two reasons, one of which relates to the effect of the proposal on the neighbouring windows on level two of the existing building. During the appeal process, additional information has been provided by the appellant which shows that the windows in question serve a communal area rather than a habitable room. On this basis, the Council has confirmed that it is satisfied that there would not be an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residential windows. As there is no longer any dispute between the parties in relation to this issue I do not address it in the reasoning below.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host building and the Larkhall Conservation Area (LCA).

Reasons

5. The appeal property is located within the LCA which is characterised by C19th century development fronting onto Lansdowne Way, Larkhall Lane and Priory Grove. The LCA is predominately residential, including detached and semi-detached villas and terraces. Properties show a range of architectural styles

but are generally two or three storeys high, many are constructed of yellow stock brick with slate roofs. The traditional buildings and fine grain character of the LCA contrast with the more modern development beyond its boundaries and along Wandsworth Road.

6. The appeal site is located along Priory Grove which is a quiet, narrow street leading to Larkhall Park. The appeal property is a former primary and secondary school building which was designed by architect Edward Robert Robson and opened in 1886. It is identified by the Council as an undesignated heritage asset which is, together with the adjacent school keeper's house, locally listed.
7. The appeal building, which is significantly larger than others in the LCA, is constructed of yellow stock brick with red brick dressing and has a large, steeply pitched roof with prominent gables, chimneys and dormers. It is an attractive building with a distinct institutional character and its original use as a school is reinforced by the presence of play areas and a go kart track close by.
8. The former school has been converted to flats and has a three storey extension on the Priory Grove elevation. The development now proposed would be sited on the roof terrace of this existing extension. Views of the former school from many parts of the LCA and surrounding streets are fleeting but there are prominent views from Priory Grove and Larkhall Park. Whilst the proposed extension would be modest, approximately 4 metres by 3 metres, its siting is particularly sensitive and it would be readily visible from Priory Grove.
9. The existing three storey extension is large but appears subservient to the original four and five storey building, preserving views of the roof and upper levels. High level windows on the original building are visible through the existing railings. The proposed development, which would extend to the eaves of the original building, would raise the height of part of the existing extension, reducing the impression of subservience and the clear definition which currently exists between the extension and the former school.
10. This effect would be exacerbated by the proposed replacement of the existing railings around the roof terrace with a brick wall and glass balustrade which would also have the effect of increasing the height and bulk of the existing extension, to the detriment of the host building.
11. I consider that the proposed extension would cause harm to the locally listed former school. I recognise that the proposed development has been carefully designed to respect the existing building with matching materials and windows. However, this is not sufficient to overcome the harm I have identified.
12. The former school building is a significant feature within the LCA and contributes positively to it, both visually and by helping to tell the story of the area's development. By impacting negatively on the former school, the proposed development would cause harm to the LCA. Whilst this harm would be 'less than substantial' in the context of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I have identified no public benefit which would outweigh it.
13. As a result of the harm that I have identified above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the host building and the LCA. The proposed development would be contrary to

Policy Q5 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 (which encourages the design of development to respond to local context and historic character); Policy Q11 (which requires that proposals for extensions should positively respond to the original architecture); Policy Q22 (which is concerned with development in conservation areas) and Policy Q23 (which seeks to preserve, protect and safeguard assets on the local heritage list). Furthermore, the proposal would conflict with Framework paragraphs 196 which explains that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Conflict would also arise with Framework paragraph 197 which calls for a balanced judgement of any harm against the significance of the heritage asset.

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Rosie Morgan

Inspector