



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2019

by Thomas Shields MA DipURP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/C/18/3212014

Land at Avon House School, 490-494 High Road, Woodford Green, IG8 0PN

- The appeal is made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (hereafter “the Act”).
 - The appeal is made by Avon House School Limited against an enforcement notice issued by the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The enforcement notice was issued on 12 July 2018.
 - The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is without planning permission, the erection of a roof extension including a roof dormer and installation of roof lights to sports hall outlined in blue on the attached plan.
 - The requirements of the notice are:
 1. Remove the unauthorised roof extension including roof dormer and roof lights and make good any damage done.
 2. Remove from the land all building materials and rubble arising from compliance with the step (1) above.
 - The period for compliance with the requirements is 9 months.
 - The appeal is proceeding on the grounds set out in section 174(2)(a), (f) and (g) of the Act. Since the prescribed fee has been paid within the specified period, the application for planning permission deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Act also falls to be considered.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, the enforcement notice is quashed and planning permission is granted on the application deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Act for the development already carried out, namely the erection of a roof extension including a roof dormer and installation of roof lights to sports hall on land at Avon House School, 490-494 High Road, Woodford Green, IG8 0PN.

The appeal on ground (a)/deemed application for planning permission

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, in particular whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Woodford Green Conservation Area (WGCA), a designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is one of a small complex of buildings that comprise Avon House School and which fronts onto a slip road parallel with High Road. The frontage buildings are traditional Georgian villas while the buildings set back at the rear, including the appeal building, are generally more recent additions

having a more utilitarian character and appearance. The front villas along with other nearby buildings, some locally listed, are identified as an Important Frontage in the WGCA character appraisal. The Church of All Saints fronting Inmans Row is a Grade II Listed Building.

4. The appeal building is located to the rear in the northwest corner of the appeal site, providing a sports hall on the ground floor with the dormer extension, subject of the appeal, divided into two classrooms accessed off an internal corridor. The PVCu corridor windows in the dormer match those at ground floor and face east across the playground area. The two classrooms have high level roof lights. Grey flat tiles to the face and cheeks of the dormer are similar in tone and colour to the main roof, while the whole of the ground floor is finished in white render.
5. Given the context of the length, pitch and height of the building's existing roof slope I acknowledge that the continuous single dormer is large. However, it is nonetheless inset from the ends, ridge and eaves of the roof and, contrary to the Council's view, I consider it is not of such a size and mass that it appears bulky or out of scale with the host building. The simple rectangular design of the building, similar to others nearby, is not disturbed or appears overburdened by the development. I find that the design and form of the building taken as a whole, including the dormer extension, is compatible with its functional educational purpose and sits comfortably with those in the collection of various secondary buildings, and additions to main buildings, at the rear of the frontage properties and to the rear of the Church of All Saints.
6. Other than from within the site or from angular views taken from upper floor rear windows of nearby properties, the dormer is not readily visible. From the public realm it can be seen primarily as an end-on view along the line of Cromer Road. However, it does not encroach or block that open linear vista from High Road because the building (and dormer extension) is tucked into the corner of the site, to the rear and in line with the buildings which comprise the Traveller's Friend public house. Overall, the extension is not overly dominant or intrusive.
7. Taking account of the above factors, I conclude that the development does not result in harm to the character or appearance of the WGCA, the designated heritage asset. While no harm results, its effect is neutral overall and thus the character and appearance of the Woodford Green Conservation Area is preserved. As such, the development accords with the requirements of LP Policies 26 and 33. It would also accord with paragraph 184 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) which sets out that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Other matters

8. Turning to some other matters raised by interested parties, it is clear from internal inspection of the dormer extension that overlooking of neighbouring properties is not possible from the roof lights since they are at a high level. The main windows on the front face of the dormer serve an access corridor only. Additionally, these windows are set at an angular distance of approximately 40 metres away from the upper floor rear windows of No. 488 High Road. As such, I am not persuaded that the development results in any significant loss of privacy to occupiers of nearby residential properties.

9. Also, the dormer is located on the southern roof slope of the appeal building and hence there is no resulting loss of light or overbearing effect on neighbouring properties to the north in Churchwood Gardens.
10. Other matters raised include traffic, parking and highway safety concerns, noise disturbance from use of the sports hall, over-development of the appeal site as a whole, and breach of planning conditions attached to planning permissions for other school-related development. However, there is no convincing evidence before me to demonstrate that the appeal development would materially exacerbate any of these concerns. Moreover, these concerns did not form part of the Council's reasons for issuing the enforcement notice.
11. My consideration of these other matters does not lead me to reach a different conclusion.

Conclusion

12. For all the above reasons, the appeal on ground (a) and the application for planning permission deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Act succeeds.

Thomas Shields

INSPECTOR