



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2019

by Sarah Dyer BA BTP MRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/19/3235310

22 Fife Road, East Sheen, London SW14 7EL

- 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 Felix Beck against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 19/1143/HOT, dated 27 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'We are proposing to demolish the existing extension which have been added to the Victorian High Gothic House at a much later date. We are planning to replace those with two more modern extensions with high quality materials. The Kitchen extension will replace the current extension and not protrude beyond the current outline. The Family extension is a larger extension (80sqm) to the side of the main house and exists of a living room, a games room, a small guest room with a new entrance. Both extension have romanesque arches colonate around the outside in a modern look with clear lines. For the materials we have chosen a smooth stone which has similarities to the exiting window surrounds to visually tie the extensions together with the main house'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The original applicant on the planning submission was noted as Felix Beck, who at the time was working for Studio Webb Architects and acting as agent on behalf of the property owners. The property owners are Mr Owen Wilson and Mrs Anna Mallet and Mr Wilson has now been named as the appellant. I have determined the appeal on this basis.
3. The Council has clarified that the correct date for the Adopted Local Plan is July 2018 and that the given date of July 2019 on the Decision Notice is a typing error.

Main Issue

4. It is clear from its planning report that the Council has no objection to the rear kitchen extension, and I have little evidence before me to suggest otherwise. Therefore, the main issues are whether the side extension would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Christchurch Road Conservation Area (the CA) and the effect of the side extension on 22 Fife Road (No. 22) which is a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM).

Reasons

5. Fife Road which lies within the CA is characterised by a number of Victorian, Edwardian and later houses each individually designed and set within large gardens. The majority of buildings are set back from the road behind high hedges and walls, and there are a significant number of mature trees within front gardens. Overall the area has the ambiance of a quiet residential neighbourhood.
6. No. 22 is a typical example of the individually designed houses which face the road, albeit that it is a semi-detached dwelling, forming one half of what is described by the Victorian Society as Moorsfoot. In common with several of the buildings in Fife Road No. 22 is a BTM, as is the attached dwelling No. 20. The character of the building, as a whole, and the positive contribution which it makes to the CA is principally derived from its design which includes gables and windows of many different shapes and sizes, eaves, ridge and brickwork detailing and particularly the curved wall around a staircase at one end of the building, which forms part of No. 22. These features combine to give the building a distinctive appearance and it is a predominant part of the street scene.
7. The neighbouring building, No. 18, which is also a BTM, is smaller in scale but reflects some of the design characteristics of No.s 20 and 22. It is positioned close to the boundary with No. 20. By contrast there is a wide gap between No. 22 and the adjacent house in the street No. 28 which includes an access to development which falls outside the CA. This gap and the high canopy of the pine tree in the front garden of No. 22 facilitate a clear view of the curved wall element. An existing Victorian style conservatory, which is partially obscured by a hedge is sufficiently set back behind the curve of the staircase enclosure so as to have only a limited adverse impact on the contribution which the end elevation of No. 22 makes to the CA.
8. The footprint of the proposed side extension would be substantially larger than the conservatory which is to be removed and its front wall would sit roughly on the same line as the front of the curved wall feature. The size and alignment of the extension would bring it close to the existing hedge and the evidence before me demonstrates that it would be visible above the hedge and it would be seen within the views of the staircase enclosure from the street.
9. I have placed significant importance on the contribution which No. 22 makes to the character and appearance of the CA in its current form, and particularly the views of the curved staircase enclosure from the street. The extension would, by virtue of its proximity to this sensitive elevation and its position relative to the street, appear as a discordant feature in the context of the curved end elevation of No. 22. In so doing the extension would harm the character and appearance of the BTM and in consequence it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
10. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in making decisions on planning applications and appeals within a CA, special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. In addition, Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

11. As a consequence of its siting, the side extension would have a harmful effect on the CA. However, I find that the harm would be less than substantial. Paragraph 196 of the Framework directs that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case I have very limited evidence before me regarding any public benefits which would arise, therefore public benefit would not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset that I have found in this instance.
12. I conclude the appeal scheme would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Christchurch Road Conservation Area and it would have a harmful effect on a Building of Townscape Merit. The development is therefore contrary to Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan (2018). These policies jointly require that development contributes to and enhances the local environment and character and that it preserves and where possible enhances Conservation Areas and non-designated heritage assets including BTM.

Other Matters

13. I note from the evidence that the Council's view of the scheme may have changed over time and that the appellant considers that the determination process was 'disjointed'. However, the way in which the Council handled the application is not a matter for me to consider in the context of this appeal, which I have determined on its own individual merits.

Conclusion

14. For the reason set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Sarah Dyer

Inspector