
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2019 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) PIEMA

Decision by Andrew Owen MA BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/D/19/3230639

7 Dorncliffe Road, London SW6 5LE

- 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 T Cannell against the decision of London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.
 - The application Ref 2019/00646/FUL, dated 1 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is retention of 2 no. air-conditioning units on a flat roof above the first floor level on the flank elevation facing Hestercombe Avenue. Erection of a slatted timber cedar screen around the air-conditioning units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for 2 no. air-conditioning units on a flat roof above the first floor level on the flank elevation facing Hestercombe Avenue and erection of a slatted timber cedar screen around the air-conditioning units, at 7 Dorncliffe Road, London SW6 5LE, in accordance with the application, Ref 2019/00646/FUL, dated 1 March 2019, and the plans numbered 1306/000, 1306/699_5, 1306/699_7, 1306/699_8 and 1306/699_9, subject to the following condition:

- 1) The cedar screen hereby permitted shall be erected not later than three months from the date of this decision, and retained as such thereafter.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. At the time of my site visit, two air conditioning units (ACUs) were in place at the appeal property, but the proposed cedar screen had not been erected.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the Central Fulham Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property is an end of terrace, semi-detached Victorian dwelling. The rear gardens of residential properties on Hestercombe Avenue are located to the north west, with the garden of a residential property on Durrell Road located to the rear of the appeal property garden. Dorncliffe Road features a number of street trees and is mainly characterised by Victorian houses of similar proportions, materials and design. This style of dwelling is a typical feature of the CA generally and it is considered that the appeal property adds to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. The ACUs are located on the flat roof at first floor level at the side of the appeal property behind a low parapet wall. In this position, the ACUs are currently partially visible from Dorncliffe Road when standing directly opposite the appeal property. When walking along Dorncliffe Road from the A304 the host property blocks any views of the ACUs. The ACUs are largely screened from view when approaching Dorncliffe Road from Hestercombe Avenue by a tree, although in winter when the tree is not in leaf, glimpsed views would be likely. One of the ACUs is also currently visible when viewed from Durrell Road, but only when standing directly opposite the rear of the appeal property. In terms of neighbouring properties, the ACUs are most likely visible from properties and gardens that back on to the appeal property on Hestercombe Avenue and Durrell Road.
7. It is proposed as part of the development to construct a cedar screen around the ACUs. Once in place, the air conditioning units would be screened and the views described above would be of a cedar screen rather than the ACUs. The proposed cedar screen is slightly larger than the ACUS so would appear more prominent in the views, although as with the ACUs the base of the screen would be partly obscured from view by the parapet wall.
8. Whilst the proposed cedar screen would be partially visible from a number of public and private locations, when taking into account the separation distance from those locations and the elevated position of the proposal, the screen will appear as a relatively small and inconspicuous feature and not draw the eye or appear obtrusive against the built form of the side of the appeal property. Though I note the comments from neighbours regarding possible alternative location for the equipment, I must consider the proposal before me on its own merits. Overall, the proposal would not result in a significant change to the external appearance of the host property.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host property and would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. It would accord with Policies DC1 and DC8 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (February 2018) which amongst other things seek to respect, conserve and enhance heritage assets. It would also accord with Policy DC4 which seeks to ensure alterations to existing buildings are compatible with the scale and character of existing development.

Other Matters

10. I have considered the concerns of neighbouring residents with regard to noise and disturbance from the ACUs. However, the Council's Environment Service Team has assessed the External Condenser Acoustic Assessment Report which

was submitted in support of the planning application and has confirmed it is acceptable. I have no reason to consider otherwise, particularly given the small scale of the ACUs, the screening proposed and the separation distance from neighbouring properties.

Conditions

11. As the development has already started, through the provision of the ACUs, it is not appropriate to impose the suggested condition requiring the development to commence within three years. However I have imposed a condition requiring the cedar screen to be erected not later than three months from the date of this decision and thereafter retained, as this is important to ensure the ACUs do not have an unacceptable visual impact. Also the terms of the decision includes reference to the plans in the interests of certainty.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is allowed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR