



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 September 2019

by Adrian Caines BSc(Hons) MSc TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/D/19/3232959

250 Du Cane Road, London W12 0BJ

- 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 R Moore against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.
 - The application Ref 2019/01304/FUL, dated 25 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as loft conversion following rear dormer and front roof slope window to comply with conservation area type.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposals would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Old Oak and Wormholt Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Old Oak and Wormholt Conservation Area (CA), which from the information before me and my own observations during my site visit, derives its significance from the consistent groups of "cottage-style" properties, which are laid out in a garden suburb style. The uniformity between the individual properties that comprise each separate building group are a distinctive and attractive character of the area. This includes symmetrical buildings with unaltered roofs, both front and back, or with repeated original features such as projecting gables, or small hipped front dormers, which contribute to a cohesive character.
4. The appeal property is typical of this character. It is a two storey mid-terrace house set within a crescent around a communal lawn and gardens. The terrace has a steep unaltered roof with very prominent, full height gables at the flank ends onto Du Cane Road and one in the centre. There are four other smaller gables spaced along the length of the terrace. The gables are also repeated regularly to the rear where gardens back onto the rear of terraced properties on Erconwald Street and Fitzneal Street. Some of the original windows have been replaced with upvc alternatives and there are some small satellite dishes to the front, but these have not significantly compromised the architectural integrity and symmetry of this highly attractive unlisted building, which makes an important positive contribution to the CA.

5. The proposed rear dormer would be some 2m wide and 2.5m high, with a flat roof. Even though it would be set in from the eaves, ridge and sides, its size and boxy proportions would nevertheless cause significant disruption to the profile and uniformity of the large expanse of the rear roofscape, where no such features exist. As such, notwithstanding the use of complementary roof materials, it would draw attention to itself and appear as an incongruous addition relative to the uniformity of the existing roof. Consequently, it would not be a sympathetic addition to the property.
6. Although the dormer would be shielded from public views from the street, it would be readily visible to many of the surrounding neighbouring properties. These views also contribute to the character and appearance of the CA and are therefore important. Irrespective, the requirement for development proposals to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA applies with equal force whether or not the proposal is prominent or in public view.
7. In support of the appeal, the appellant referred me to existing dormers at 237 and 247 Du Cane Road, but I am not aware of the planning status or circumstances which led to their existence. Furthermore, they are in the minority and are not viewed in the same context as the appeal site, such that they do not exercise any significant influence on the character and appearance of the area surrounding the appeal site. The rooflights and solar panels to the rear of properties in Erconwald Street and Fitzneal Street are also in the minority and are not comparable to the proposed dormer.
8. My attention was also drawn to planning permission for rear dormers at 255 Du Cane Road, which was granted by the Council in 2017. I note from the Council's delegated report that the planning officer considered the presence of "*several dormers near the site*" and "*no public vantage points*" to be significant factors in the assessment of that case. However, for the reasons above, I do not regard the absence of public vantage points to be a determinative factor, and furthermore, the circumstances are not directly comparable to the proposal before me. In any case, I am required to consider the appeal proposal on its own individual merits, which is the approach that I have taken in determining this appeal.
9. In respect of the front rooflight, there are no rooflights on the existing building and few examples of similar insertions in the vicinity, such that where they do exist, they are in the minority. Even though the proposed rooflight would be a 'conservation-type', it would nevertheless detract from the unspoiled roof slope it would be sited within and disrupt the uniformity of the terrace. As such, it would be an incongruous addition that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the property and to the terrace as a whole. I am not aware of the planning status or circumstances that led to the existence of the front rooflights at 237 Du Cane Road, but in any event, they do not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area. Their presence is not a reason, on its own, to allow further unacceptable development.
10. I therefore find that the dormer and rooflight would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. This would weaken the positive contribution that the building makes to the CA.
11. For all these reasons, I conclude that the proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, thereby causing harm to its

significance as a heritage asset. This is contrary to Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016), Policies DC1, DC4 and DC8 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (2018), together with guidance in the Hammersmith and Fulham Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2018). When considered together, these seek to ensure that new development is of high quality design which preserves or enhances the historic significance of designated heritage assets, including Conservation Areas.

12. This harm to the CA as a designated heritage asset would be 'less than substantial' in the terms of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and is therefore required to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.
13. It has been put to me that the proposals would fulfil the optimal viable use of the property as a larger family home. However, the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is not dependent on the proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence. Nor would its harmful extension constitute securing the optimal viable use of the building's contribution to the CA. Any benefit to family housing provision would be very limited, given the quantum of development, and not sufficient to outweigh the significant harm that I have identified above.

Other Matters

14. I note the appellant's points regarding the absence of harm to living conditions of neighbours and that there were no objections, but whilst these are not disputed, they neither alter nor outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to accord with the relevant policies of the development plan and the Framework, and therefore the appeal should be dismissed.

Adrian Caines

INSPECTOR