



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2019

by D. Szymanski, BSc (Hons) MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/19/3232884

36 Rutland Road, Wanstead, London, E11 2DY

- 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 Harpreet Sarna against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref: 5282/18 dated 19 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 17 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with hip to gable, 2 roof lights to front slope and rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of the development in the banner heading above was taken from the original planning application form. In the Council's decision notice, it is described as 'Loft conversion with a rear dormer. Hip to gable roof alterations. Two front roof lights', with a similar description used in the appellant's appeal form. I consider the Council's description to be a more accurate description of the development because it confirms the hip to gable is a roof alteration, and I have considered the appeal on this basis.
3. The appeal site is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, the other being No. 34 Rutland Road, for which an application was made for an equivalent similar development at the same time, and planning permission refused. A subsequent appeal to that decision (Ref: APP/W5780/D/19/3232876) has also been made. The appeals cannot be considered jointly because each is a separate planning application at a different appeal site, so the development at No. 34 is the subject of a separate appeal decision. However, as Inspector for that other appeal I am aware of the full details of that case and will have regard to it as appropriate.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are: the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling; and, whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site forms the left-hand semi (when facing the front from Rutland Road) of a pair of art-deco style dwellings, lying within the Wanstead Grove Conservation Area (WGCA). Both Nos. 36 and 34 exhibit a strong degree of symmetry from features including their light rendering, hipped roofs, central chimney stack, and curved bay windows, but with No. 36 only having an attached garage. Their architectural style sets them apart to a small degree from other semi-detached dwellings nearby that integrate semi-circular or semi-hexagonal bays below a small gable feature. Whilst some dwellings in Rutland Road and the WGCA have side extensions or alterations, most retain the original hipped roofs, giving a strong degree of symmetry, balance and rhythm.
6. The proposed change from a shallower and smoother hipped roofline to a more abrupt and angular gable roof form and large box style dormer would considerably alter the character and appearance of the dwelling. These alterations would greatly and detrimentally increase the bulk and massing of the roof from the front, side and rear. They would be at odds with and dominate the host dwelling, being significantly harmful its character and appearance, and being unsympathetic and detracting from the smooth lines and light rendered finish characteristic of the dwelling.
7. The gable roof and dormer would markedly enclose and reduce the sense of space between the appeal site and the adjoining No. 38 and the dormer would be particularly visible from the rear of a number of neighbouring properties. Some gaps in the street scene (and the wider WGCA) are interrupted/reduced by gable roofs, and there are examples of similar large box dormers. However, these are not so numerous that they have become part of the overriding character and their presence doesn't justify allowing further harm. The proposed front roof lights would not result in any significant harm, but their installation is heavily dependent upon the proposed hip to gable roof.
8. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property which would be contrary to Policies LP26 and LP30 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (2018) (the Local Plan) and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016). Amongst other things, and in combination, these policies expect development of a high-quality design and architecture that respects local character, complements the character of and is subordinate to the host building, incorporates a sympathetic roof profile and maintains adequate spacing between buildings.
9. Within the WGCA there is a statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework) requires that when considering the impact upon the significance of a heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (paragraph 196).
10. The WGCA appears spacious and open with the symmetry and rhythm of the hipped gables of the dwellings playing a contributing part. It is understood to have been designated because of the area being a good example of varied

house types primarily from the Edwardian and Victorian era but including some high-quality examples of art deco architecture overlaid on an 18th century designed landscape.

11. The proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the art deco style host dwelling, a potential harmful loss of symmetry, and the reduction in openness and significant enclosure of space between No. 36 and 38. This would neither preserve or enhance, and would result in a small amount of harm to the character and appearance of the WGCA, to elements that make a positive contribution to its significance. Overall, this harm is considered to be less than substantial harm.
12. Whilst I have noted the intention to implement these proposals and those at No. 34 together, I have not been provided with a suitable mechanism that would secure this. The implementation of the proposed development on this appeal site only, would result in considerable harm from the loss of an important element of the symmetry between No. 34 and No. 36, and resulting in it appearing incongruous next to the smaller adjacent No. 34. Even if the two developments were implemented together, whilst the loss of symmetry would not occur, the other aspects of harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the WGCA I have identified above, and in the other appeal decision (Ref: APP/W5780/D/19/3232876), would occur. Supporting representations advocate the proposed development at this appeal site, and the adjoining appeal site at No. 34 would add to the character of the property and enhance the WGCA. However, for the reasons set out above I disagree.
13. There would be some minor temporary benefit from the development to the local construction industry, and once complete there would be some benefit to the appellant in terms of the use of the dwelling from the increased floorspace/bedroom. However, based on the evidence before me, these and any other benefits of the scheme, would not outweigh the harm to the WGCA.
14. For the reasons set out above the proposed development would be contrary to Policies LP26 and LP33 of the Local Plan and Policy 7.8 of the London Plan. In combination, amongst other things, these policies expect development to conserve and enhance the character, appearance and significance of a heritage asset, and that permission should be refused for development that would result in harm to or the loss of the significance, unless it can be demonstrated the proposal achieves public benefits that outweigh any harm. As the public benefits do not outweigh the harm, the proposed development would also be contrary to paragraph 196 of the Framework.

Other Matters

15. The Council's report references a short extract of an appeal decision at 10 Abbotsford Road, which I have been provided with no further information upon and cannot make a direct comparison to the appeal proposal. The appellant has provided photographs of examples of roofs and conversions similar to that proposed, mostly in the WGCA and most of which I viewed on my site visit. The Council's report suggests that individual gable roofs in the area were altered prior to the WGCA designation. Based on the limited information before me of each of the examples I am not aware of their detailed circumstances and unable to make a direct comparison to the appeal proposal. I have assessed this appeal proposal on its own merits and impacts, and similar development nearby does not provide justification for allowing a harmful development.

16. I note the appellant's comments in respect of a side and rear dormer at No. 38, and its potential application at the appeal site, which also appears to be implied in the Council's report. However, this is not the proposal before me for consideration.
17. I note the appellant's comments that no objections have been received, and furthermore the proposed development would not be harmful to the amenity of neighbouring properties. I also note the Council's conclusions in regard of neighbouring amenity. However, I have not been provided with evidence to affirm this in respect of the side dormer at No. 38. Even if the impact upon the amenity of No. 38 was acceptable, this would not override the harm I have found in respect of the main issues above.

Conclusion

18. The proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and there are no other considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

Dan Szymanski

INSPECTOR