



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2019

by S Dean MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/W/19/3229975
104 Columbia Road, London E2 7QB

- 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 Ataur Rahman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/19/00328, dated 4 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a rear out-building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Jesus Hospital Estate Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The site is a prominent corner building facing Columbia Road and Ravenscroft Street, similar in materials, design and detailing to the rest of the street and the wider area. This location and arrangement of nearby streets means that the side and rear of the building, as well as the relationship to buildings on Ravenscroft Street are prominent and feature in longer views.
4. The Jesus Hospital Estate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines, adopted 2009, updated 2016 (the Appraisal), says the overall character and appearance of the area is found in the homogeneity of the streets and overall uniformity, rhythm, matching materials and details. The Appraisal also notes the consistent roofscape throughout much of the CA, including the visible lack of roof where buildings front the street, due to the use of shallow pitches and parapet walls.
5. The appeal site and many of the neighbouring properties appear to have been variously altered over time. However, the overall character and appearance of the area, to which the site positively contributes, is retained.

6. The gap between the rear of the appeal site and the side of the terrace on Ravenscroft Street creates an opening in the terracing, giving this part of the CA a slightly more spacious, and less intensively built-up appearance. This gap also allows views of the rear of the Columbia Road terrace, showing the difference between the front and the rear of the terraces, particularly in terms of roof-form. These views also allow a clear view and understanding of the way in which rear extensions and outbuildings step-down from, and are subservient to, the main buildings. The existing, somewhat informal storage area to the rear of the site is currently visible in the street-scene, but owing to its height and mixed materials, is subservient to the stepped-down scale of the existing additions to the rear of the appeal site.
7. I consider that the general uniformity of scale to the rear of the terrace, as well as the more open views across the appeal site from Ravenscroft Street, also add positively and distinctively to the character and appearance to this part of the CA.
8. The increased height and length of the wall adjoining the pavement, coupled with the overall height of the development would unbalance the relationship of the outbuilding to the host-building, and its existing stepped-down, subservient rear elements. It would also have the effect of enclosing the more open views across the rear of the terraced properties when viewed from Ravenscroft Street.
9. The form and visibility of the proposed roof would also conflict with the wider character and appearance of the area, in which roofs fronting onto streets are generally set behind parapet walls to give the area a *"hard, straight edged appearance"*.
10. The current gateway, related drop-kerb and surfacing all points to the historic development and access to the rear of this terrace. The reduction in the width of the gateway would sever that visual and functional connection between the appeal site and the street, resulting in harm to the historic character and appearance of the area.
11. Given the prominence of the appeal site from public views and the wider street-scene, the outbuilding would appear unduly tall, prominent and at odds with the established form and scale of development in the surrounding area.
12. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. In the context of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), less than substantial harm would be caused to the CA. However, I do not consider that there are any identified public benefits which would outweigh this harm. In reaching this view, I note that paragraph 193 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of the heritage asset.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not accord with the requirements of Policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, Policy SP10 of the Tower Hamlets Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2025 and Policy DM27 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan Managing Development Document 2013 (the Local Plan) and the Framework, all of which seek to protect and enhance the significance, character, appearance and quality of heritage assets.

14. The proposal would also conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016 and Policy DM24 of the Local Plan which seek to ensure that development is appropriate to the character and appearance of an area, complements local character and is of high quality.

Other Matters

15. The appellant notes that the building is not listed. Whilst this is the case, it does not alter my consideration of the appeal proposal in terms of its effect on the CA.
16. I also note the comments of the appellant that the building would be built to a high standard and would be energy efficient. However, these are not matters which would alter or outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Dean

INSPECTOR