
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 October 2019

by David Murray BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/19/3237201
45 The Avenue, Twickenham, TW1 1QU.

- 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 P Hawkins against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref. 19/1393/HOT, dated 30 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a roof extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. I have used the description of the development proposed as drafted by the Council as it better describes the actual proposal than the term 'loft conversion' mentioned in the application forms.
3. The Council refers in the reason for refusal to the 'detriment of the amenities of neighbouring properties' however, I take this to be a further element of the visual effect rather than a direct effect on the living conditions of these occupiers.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed roof extension on the character and appearance of the host building and its setting in the St Margaret's Estate Conservation Area.

Reasons

Background

5. The appeal site contains a two storey residential property which lies in a frontage of large residential properties which line the north-western side of The Avenue opposite the A316. This side of the road also contains a line of mature plane trees. The local area forms part of St. Margaret's Estate Conservation Area which is an asset of historic significance. The proposal is to add a second floor in the form of a mansard roof which would have three further bedrooms and a music room.

Effect on character and appearance

6. In considering this issue I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset of the Conservation Area.
7. The properties in the street frontage have a variety of architectural styles and form. At my site visit I noted that some properties are a full three storeys in height while others have accommodation in the roof space and lit by dormer windows in the roof or windows in a second floor gable. Therefore, in general townscape terms the appeal site host property appears relatively low in the street scene. However, this variation to height and architectural form contributes positively to the character of the area and there is no presumption in townscape terms that the property heights should be 'rounded off'.
8. Turning to the architecture of the host property, the Council describes it as a Georgian property and I agree that it makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. Especially important is the form of the pyramid roof which appears 'sunk' below the surrounding parapet wall. This design allows the architectural form of the main elevation with parapet wall to be the distinctive feature.
9. In comparison, I agree with the Council that the mansard roof proposed would detract from the original form of this Georgian house, as the bulk of the roof and the insertion of three windows above the extended eaves would fundamentally change the appearance of the property and harm its individual character. The change would dominate the architectural form of the property and greatly diminish its contribution to the street scene. I acknowledge that the height of the mansard roof is no greater than the present apex of the pyramid roof but this simple comparison ignores the bulk and form of the roof and other embellishments at the eaves which would be quite different in character.
10. On the details of the scheme put forward, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and not preserve or enhance it and this would diminish its significance in the Conservation Area. As such it would be contrary to the provisions of Policy LP3 in terms of the designated heritage asset and the more general policy LP1 on maintaining the high quality character of the Borough.
11. This finding needs to be balanced with the benefits of development. I have taken account of the submission that the scheme would help improve and update the internal arrangements of the building and may overcome a problem associated with rainwater leaking behind the parapet wall. But these factors are not of such weight as to override the harm to the appearance of the building that the proposed change would cause. I have also noted the photographs of other properties submitted in comparison which are said to have a new form of mansard roof similar to the one proposed. However, the properties put forward seem to be of different architectural styles. They do not set much of a precedent in favour of the appeal scheme which I have considered on its individual merits.
12. In terms of the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly paragraphs 193-197, I find that while the proposal would cause 'less than substantial harm' to the heritage asset, this has not been shown to

be outweighed by public benefits or is needed to ensure an optimum viable use.

Conclusion

13. I conclude that the other considerations which arise in this case do not outweigh the conflict with the development plan and the adverse effect that would arise with the development proposed. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

David Murray

INSPECTOR