
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2019

by Diane Cragg DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/W/19/3235147

15 Enfield Road, Hackney, London N1 5EN

- 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 Tandridge Investments Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
 - The application Ref 2018/4449, dated 4 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey, set back roof extension to existing residential building comprising of one additional dwelling unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property, a non-designated heritage asset, and the Kingsland Road Conservation Area (KCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a substantial three storey former school building which has been converted into residential flats. The building is orientated east-west on a triangular shaped area of land enclosed by Hertford Road, Enfield Road and Downham Road. The site is within the KCA. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), requires that I pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
4. As a late nineteenth century school that served the local population the building reflects the historical development of the KCA. Additionally, it reflects the architecture of the late nineteenth century and local character, being of stock brick with red dressings. The external elevations provide evidence of its previous use through its architectural style, which was typical of Victorian schools. This is illustrated by the scale of the building and its fenestration. Therefore, the site can be considered a positive contributor within the KCA.
5. The significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset resides in its architectural and historical interest as a former Victorian school. With a small amount of aesthetic and environmental significance arising from its prominence along Hertford Road and its positive contribution to this street.

6. The building is largely obscured from view from Enfield Road behind modern development and is similarly enclosed by modern development from much of the Downham Road frontage. Along Hertford Road the building's west elevation and most of the long south elevation is visible from various vantage points. Amongst the modern development that surrounds it, the scale of the school building and its fenestration detail, with strong vertical emphasis, ensures that the building stands out as an impressive structure. Its presence in the street scene particularly along Hertford Road and in views from the junction of Hertford Road and Downham Road positively contributes to the significance of the KCA.
7. The former school building, to outward appearance at street level, has a pitched tiled roof to all elevations. However, the central plan of the building is flat roofed. The proposed roof extension would be sited on the flat roof and would take the form of an aluminium framed structure, mostly glazed but with areas of render and a flat green roof. The roof extension would sit above the highest part of the pitched roof by some margin.
8. The appellant has undertaken analysis identifying four key views from where the development's visibility has been interpreted. In these short and medium views, it is concluded that at street level the development would be visible from Hertford Road near its junction with Downham Road. In this view the form of the building and roof line would be discernible above the existing pitched roof on the south elevation.
9. From this vantage point the proposed structure, with a long flat roof and large expanse of glass would be visually obtrusive and would not reflect architectural features or themes within the original building, including in its fenestration. Further, the extension's height, form and materials would not respond to, or sit comfortably with, the existing roof form; appearing as an awkward addition to the outwardly simple pitched roof design. Consequently, there would be an unduly harmful impact on the appearance of the KCA. This would diminish the positive contribution the building makes to the conservation area's character and appearance.
10. Furthermore, the views analysis does not account for elevated views from surrounding properties. The surrounding properties contain various windows that face towards the appeal site. They would have a different appreciation of the proposed structure. In my assessment from an elevated position the form of the roof extension and its awkward visual connection with the existing pitched roof would be more apparent.
11. I appreciate that the surrounding roofscape is varied and that the more modern development adjacent to the appeal site has various roof designs, some of which appear as roof extensions. I also accept that the roof of the appeal property has been changed; although I have not been presented with detailed evidence of its former appearance. However, in its context, the building stands out as an earlier structure of more merit and importance and this, in my view, is a factor in the appeal site being more sensitive to change.
12. Overall, I find that the roof extension would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the host property and would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character of appearance of the KCA. As a consequence, the proposal would conflict with Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, Policies 24 and 25 of the Core Strategy Hackney's Strategic

Planning Policies for 2010-2025, DM1 and DM28 of the Development Management Local Plan July 2015 and Supplementary Planning Document Residential Extensions and Alterations April 2009. These policies collectively seek to ensure that development is informed by, and sympathetic to, its surrounding environment, and is of the highest architectural design.

13. The KCA is a designated heritage asset as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework). Paragraph 193 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. The harm I have identified in the context of the Framework would be less than substantial. The Framework requires that less than substantial harm be weighed against the public benefits.
14. In addition, paragraph 197 of the Framework requires that the effect of a development on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications.
15. The appellant has not put forward any public benefits to outweigh the harm I have identified. The building would however provide an additional dwelling in an accessible location. I have not been provided with any evidence of the need for housing in this area. Despite this, I attach a small amount of weight to the benefit of an additional dwelling. However, this would not outweigh the great weight to be given to the less than substantial harm I have identified to the significance of the KCA or the harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

Other Matters

16. I note that the appellant is aware of other schools where roof extensions have been accepted. However, I have no evidence of where these developments are or the circumstances in which these schemes were considered acceptable. In any case I have determined this application based on the evidence before me and the individual site circumstances.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Diane Cragg

INSPECTOR