



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2019

by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26TH November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W /19/3229198

7 Lansdowne Way, London SW8 1HL

- 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 Mrs V Ramos against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/00608/FUL, dated 17 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of windows to front and rear elevation at first floor level and change of shop front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Works to the property were ongoing at the time of my site visit and alterations to the rear elevation openings and replacement of the first floor windows had occurred. Those works do not reflect the details in the appeal plans. For the avoidance of doubt, this appeal is determined on the basis of the submitted plans only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the building and the South Lambeth Road Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. No 7 Lansdowne Way lies within a mid-C19 terrace of shops with accommodation above. The site is set immediately to the rear of the pavement on the southern side of the road and lies within the CA. The core reason for designation and the significance of the CA derives from development characterised by the area's C19 villas and terraces with neo-Classical or Italianate detailing; and, as a microcosm of the various domestic architectural styles and building types common locally.
5. The building has a two-storey façade that has retained much of its architectural integrity. At ground floor, like the majority of the adjacent shop units in the terrace, a good deal of the original shop front elements remain. These include the corbel detailing, the upper fascia and cornice, and the original stallriser. At first floor the unit has twin window openings common with the remainder of the terrace. The rear of the terrace has seen significant extension and alterations, including a large single storey extension to no 7.
6. The ground floor display window of no 7 had been removed at the time of my visit, however, the evidence provided by both parties suggest that this was not in its

original configuration having been formed of three timber framed glazing panels and a separate doorway. These had been overlain by external metal tube-and-link open-style security shuttering with an associated shutter box and tracking.

7. The proposed replacement shop front using aluminium framed windows and door would reflect the treatment of other examples visible within the immediate row of commercial units. However, policies Q5 and Q11 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2015) have a strong emphasis on responding to the positive characteristics of the local and historic character. Whilst there do not appear to be any remaining examples of original display windows present within the CA, the further departure from the use of traditional designs and materials would constitute a retrograde step against this policy aim.
8. The use of highly manufactured and visually harsher materials would result in an ultra-modern appearance of the aperture. This would inevitably contradict the design of the retained surrounding original shop front elements. Furthermore, the loss of the original stallriser and introduction of new proportions to the aperture would be at odds with both the original arrangement and that of the other commercial unit facades within the terrace. This would further erode the historic character of the building and the terrace. Whilst the presence of other non-traditional materials are present elsewhere in the street and wider CA, these are not a strong point in favour of the appeal scheme, a scheme which I have considered on its own merits.
9. The proposals show the installation of external shuttering, however, little detail is provided within the submissions. Given the established presence of shuttering at the site, the principle of its replacement would be justified. A replacement of the type of shuttering previously mounted across the window and door would preserve the former character, however, use of more solid forms of shuttering would almost certainly appear harsh, less inviting and reduce the visual quality of the building.
10. Solid shutters conceal the visual interest of the internal spaces and the merchandise or services being offered within them. They present a defensive and visually poor contribution to the street scene which would be retrograde to the building's appearance and that of the area generally. In order to retain quality of design and appearance, the approval of additional detail would be necessary to make that element of the proposals acceptable in planning terms.
11. With regard to the upper floor windows, the Council considers that at the time of the planning application, these retained their original timber sash windows. The original front windows are visible in the submitted evidence and reflect the arrangement of other examples within the CA. These appear as single glazed, top-hung timber sash windows with fine glazing bars dividing the upper and lower panes into six. To the rear, the openings are shown as two-over-two sliding sash windows in offset positions but of consistent proportioning.
12. A building's fenestration is an important component in defining its visual and architectural character. This is very apparent in the wider CA and the loss of timber joinery appears detrimental to the character of buildings and the CA. Notwithstanding the variation of windows present within the front façade of the terrace; the loss of the original style of window in terms of its materials, design and method of opening, would result in the loss of finer detailing, balance and visual interest that reflect the building's historic character.
13. There are examples of other top opening white uPVC windows in the immediate vicinity. The local examples demonstrate the heavier appearance of the framing, particularly of the overlying opening section where the glazing area is reduced. The

modern material would fail to reflect the character and consistency of proportioning of the originals and would appear crude and ungainly compared to them. This would be to the significant detriment of the building's character and appearance.

14. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Whilst the proposed windows to the rear would not be visible from public areas, the proposed alterations to the façade of the building would contribute to the incremental dilution of the character and appearance of the wider CA. This would arise through the use of non-traditional materials and loss of original architectural elements and detailing. It would therefore fail to meet the tests of preserving or enhancing either the character or appearance of the CA.
15. Whilst this harm would be no greater than less than substantial within the context of Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), less than substantial harm does not equate to a less than substantial planning objection. I note the potential public benefits of the proposal, such as securing active commercial and residential uses within the building and its consequential improved maintenance; however, these are not benefits necessarily dependent on the success of this planning appeal and, in any case, would not outweigh the less than substantial harm I have identified.
16. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the building and the South Lambeth Road Conservation Area and therefore conflict with Policies Q2, Q5, Q8, Q11 and Q22 of the LP which seek, amongst other things, to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of heritage assets.

Conclusion

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

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR