



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2019

by Elaine Worthington BA (Hons) MTP MUED MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/Y/19/3236053

4 Whittlesey Street, London, SE1 8SZ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Maya Lester against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 19/01145/LB, dated 27 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2019.
 - The works proposed are the removal of a section of rear masonry wall and retention of associated downstands.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the removal of a section of rear masonry wall and retention of associated downstands at 4 Whittlesey Street, London, SE1 8SZ, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 19/01145/LB, dated 27 March 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) The works hereby authorised shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, Drawing 1488/P3/110 Proposed Ground Floor Plan, Drawing 1488/P3/210 Proposed Rear Elevation, Drawing 1488/P3/310 Proposed Section AA, and Drawing 1488/P3/311 Proposed Section BB.
 - 3) The external works and finishes, including those of making good shall, match the existing building, in respect of the materials, colour, texture, profile and finished appearance except where indicated otherwise on the approved plans.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of 4 Whittlesey Street, a grade II listed building, and whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance the Roupell Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey late Georgian terraced property. It forms part of a group of nine grade II listed buildings at Nos 2-18 (even) Whittlesey

Street. Its attractive early nineteenth century appearance and form contribute to its significance as a heritage asset.

4. It is within the Roupell Conservation Area. This comprises a relatively compact homogenous area of similar modest terraced housing constructed of yellow London brick. The area is tightly knit, with the buildings facing directly on to the street in a uniform pattern with standardised features and detailing. The Council advises that the Roupell Conservation Area Statement 2007 recognises that the uniformity of the houses on Whittlesey Street gives a smart, distinct and regular character. This accords with my own observations on site. The appeal property, and the other buildings in the row, contribute to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and its significance as a heritage asset.
5. A single storey glazed conservatory has recently been permitted to the rear of the appeal property but not constructed. The proposed works would see a section of the existing ground floor rear wall which in part separates the living and dining area from the kitchen removed to create an extended open plan room which would also incorporate the new conservatory. The appellant considers that they would allow an improved use of the rooms at the rear of the house.
6. The appeal building's rear elevation was remodelling in the 1970s when it was rebuilt on the same line as the original but with a higher parapet level in modern yellow bricks. A single storey extension with a flat roof covering the eastern part of the rear elevation was also constructed at that time. The Council considers that since the historic detailing has been authentically reproduced in new work, this rear wall contributes to the character of the building and warrants retention. I also note the findings of the Inspector dealing with recent appeals¹ at neighbouring No 2 who found that the reconstructed rear elevation of that property was sympathetic to the wider character and form of the listed building.
7. The works would see the removal of a small part of the property's rear wall either side of, and including, an existing sash window, and an even narrower section of the side wall of the extension. Whilst they would lead to a loss of building fabric that would require structural support as a result, those parts of the walls that would be removed would not be large. They are at ground floor only and display no architectural embellishment or distinctive features. Notwithstanding the points made by the Council regarding the reconstructed rear elevation, nor are they part of the original building fabric. Much of the rear façade of the building would be retained. Whilst a void could be created, the permitted conservatory would effectively internalise those parts of the walls which would be removed. Thus, I am not convinced that the works would be appreciated as a large open aperture within the brickwork since, despite its glass construction, they would be concealed by the conservatory.
8. In terms of the property's internal layout, the Council is concerned about the effect of the works on the modest cellular floor plan which is a particular historic feature of the listed building and characteristic of the properties in the street. The proposed works would open up the permitted conservatory to the rest of the kitchen and dining/living area. Whilst downstands would be incorporated in place of the removed sections of wall, I accept that the works

¹ APP/N5660/Y/15/3013897 and APP/N5660/W/15/3013892

would create a large single space within what is a modest property. I also acknowledge that the resultant room would be deeper and wider than the historically higher status rooms at the front of the property.

9. That said, there is little evidence of the cellular floor pattern of the original building in its rear ground floor rooms. The 1970s single storey rear extension is connected to the original eastern rear room by a wide opening. It extends beyond and completely opens up the original rear building line of the house on its eastern side. Additionally, a wall between the two rear rooms of the house has been removed. As a result, the rear extension along with the rooms within the historic footprint of the rear of the house have been opened up to provide one single open plan L shaped space (which is used a kitchen/dining room/playroom). This space is also open to the front sitting room on the western side of the house which has already been opened up to create an elongated staggered floor plan.
10. This is being so, whilst the property's front rooms (particularly the room on the eastern side of the house) and central stair compartment retain a strong sense of the building's historic cellular quality, the single room to the rear of the house is already open and spacious and does reflect the property's original plan form or spatial qualities. Although the proposed works would reconfigure the internal layout of the house, as things stand, they would not reduce the number of rooms on the ground floor. Whilst they would incorporate the conservatory into the wider ground floor (rather than it being a separate room as permitted), and create a larger single space, they would not compromise the floor plan of the original house any more than has already taken place and the appeal property's existing overall integrity would be retained.
11. I appreciate that historic buildings are vulnerable to incremental alterations which over time, erode their integrity and significance. However, in the context described, I am satisfied that the proposed works in this case would enable a continued appreciation of the proportions of the existing rooms at the appeal property and the space they provide. Given that much of it would be retained on either side of the French doors in the play room, I am also content that the rear wall of the house would still be legible. As such, although I acknowledge that the already altered floor plan would be further eroded, in my view this would not be to such an extent that it would unduly undermine the built form plan of the house or its spatial characteristics.
12. Taking all these factors into account, with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) in mind (and having special regard to preserving the special architectural or historic interest of the appeal property), I am satisfied that the proposed works would cause no harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and would preserve the significance and special interest of the listed building. That the proposed works were omitted from the application for the approved conservatory after negotiations with the Council, does not alter my view.
13. Turning to the effect of the proposal on the Roupell Conservation Area, the Council recognises that the uniformity that characterises the front elevations of the buildings in Whittlesey Street has been to some extent lost on the rear elevations. Whilst the rear elevations there still retain their brick facades with modest and traditional window detailing and doors, there is some variety and examples of other works and rear extensions there. Given my findings in

relation to the effect of the proposed works on the listed building, and since they would not be visible from any public vantage points or prominent in any private views from nearby properties, I am satisfied that the proposed works would cause no harm to the significance of that designated heritage asset. In coming to this view, I have had regard to Section 72 of the Act which places a duty on me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

14. I therefore conclude on the main issue that the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of 4 Whittlesey Street, a grade II listed building, and would preserve the character or appearance of the Roupell Conservation Area. Thus, I see no conflict with Policy Q2 of the Lambeth Local Plan (Local Plan) which concerns amenity, or with Local Plan Policy Q5 which states that the local distinctiveness of Lambeth should be sustained and reinforced through new development. Nor would the works be contrary to Local Plan Policy Q11 (a) which requires alterations to have a design which positively responds to the original features of the host building.
15. The proposed works would align with Local Plan Policy Q20 which is supportive of development affecting listed buildings where it would (amongst other things) conserve and not harm the significance/special interest (i). It would also support Local Plan Policy Q22 which is permissive of proposals where they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas by respecting and reinforcing the established positive characteristics of the area (i). Furthermore, the proposed works would not be at odds with the Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2015) which advises that care should be taken to ensure that all alterations positively respond to the host building, respecting important features, or with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework regarding the historic environment.

Conclusion and Conditions

16. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all the other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions set out above.
17. Standard time and plans conditions are necessary as they provide certainty. A condition to ensure that all new external work and finishes match the existing dwelling are necessary to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

Elaine Worthington

INSPECTOR