
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2019

by Anne Jordan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 27th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/Y/19/3229172

6 Queens Terrace, Kings Road, Windsor, SL4 2AR

- 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 Mr John Clark against the decision of Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 18/02651, dated 10 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 November 2018.
 - The works proposed are described as "Internal alterations including removal of joinery and walls and general redecoration on the lower ground floor".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council altered the description of development to "consent to undertake internal alterations to the lower ground floor comprising: replacement floor, close and fix shut the opening from WC to kitchen, reinstate basement/sink et al, drainage to below-ground connector, reconnect waste pipes, wall removal, enlarge openings to stair, alterations to existing joinery/and existing spindles". As this more comprehensively describes the development proposed I have also used this description.
3. The Local Plan for the Borough is the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 2003 (Local Plan). The Council have also referred to policies within the emerging Borough Local Plan which is currently undergoing examination. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that the weight to be attributed to policies in emerging plans should take account of their stage of preparation. Whilst the plan is relatively well advanced, I have no indication that the policies within it will be adopted in their current form, and this limits the weight I attribute to them.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 6 Queens Terrace, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

5. S16(2) and S66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a

listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Policy LB2 of the Local Plan requires that proposals for the alteration or extension of listed buildings do not adversely affect the character of listed buildings and make use of appropriate materials and this reflects the statutory duties defined in the Act.

6. 6 Queens Terrace forms part of a terrace of 9 dwellings. The buildings are 3 storey and set back from the road by a forecourt. The group is Jacobean in design and constructed in brick of varying colours, with prominent gabled fronts to each dwelling. The windows have stone mullions and distinctive honeycomb glazing. The building is believed to have been designed by Samuel Teulon and is Grade II listed. Whilst the listing does not provide details of the interior, it is understood that some of the properties in the terrace have been reconfigured internally. The significance in the asset lies in the fact that it forms part of a well-preserved wider group, and as an attractive surviving example of a building of its type by a prominent architect.
7. The proposal comprises the removal of the internal walls between the existing internal hallway, and the adjoining dining room and kitchen. It is acknowledged that the internal hierarchy of the building would have attributed less importance to the basement and attic, as servants quarters. The floorplan has likely already been altered, with the inclusion of a WC underneath the stairs, and the likely removal of at least one partition wall within the space inhabited by the existing kitchen. Nevertheless, the cellular layout is an important characteristic of the space. The further alteration of the space would remove the kitchen wall almost entirely, and whilst the original line of the wall would be discernible in the remaining "nibs", the absence of separation would nonetheless erode the plan form and with it, some of the historic character of this part of the house. It would also lead to a loss of historic fabric. Both these factors would cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
8. With regard to the removal of the dining room wall, the submitted plans show the partial removal of this structure with the retention of the internal window by means of a steel support. As a result, the window would "float" above an empty space, allowing views of the staircase and open kitchen behind. The retention of the window in this manner would appear contrived and the steel support would introduce an incongruous element. This would fail to preserve the character of this part of the building, or its architectural interest, and would also involve the loss of historic fabric.
9. I am advised that other properties in the terrace have had the walls identified above removed at basement level. For this reason, the Council did not object to the removal of the kitchen wall. I am not aware of the circumstances which led to these or other approvals for such works along the terrace. As each proposal must be treated on its own merits, and having regard to the statutory duty under the Act, I do not consider the precedent to be justification in itself. To my mind the erosion of the original plan form of the other basements adds some weight to the need to preserve remaining examples of the original plan where appropriate.
10. The works are entirely internal and so would have only limited impact on the external appearance of the building. Due to the level of the front basement window the front façade would be unaffected and although the greater openness of the ground floor would be evident in views into the basement at

the rear, the position of the existing garden extension limits the extent of such views. This matter does not therefore add to the harm identified.

11. The harm identified would amount to "less than substantial harm" which the Framework advises must be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. The works are intended to improve the existing accommodation and so secure its optimum viable use. I have no convincing evidence that the existing accommodation is deficient, or that the existing layout prohibits the effective or comfortable use of the asset as a family home. I therefore give no weight to this matter as a public benefit. It has also been put to me that the removal of the walls is also intended to allow more light into the central area of the floorplan. Having regard to the depth of the relevant rooms, any increase in light is likely to be very low, if any, and so I attribute this matter no weight.
12. The appellant has identified a number of heritage benefits which would arise if the scheme was implemented in its entirety. These include the removal of inappropriate cornicing and radiators, removal of ceiling speakers and MDF cupboards, the reinstatement of a door to the sitting room and the reuse of part of the floorplan for storage, in line with its probable historical use. Most of these changes could be carried out without also removing the walls as proposed and in any case, whilst the cumulative effect of these minor alterations may be positive, they would not, taken together, outweigh the harm arising from the removal of historic fabric and erosion of plan form that would arise from the scheme.
13. The Framework is clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and that in considering the impact of development on the significance of heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. I therefore attribute great weight to the harm which would arise to the significance of the asset and conclude that the limited public benefits identified would not outweigh this harm. It follows that the proposal fails to comply with national policy outlined in the Framework and with policy LB2 of the Local Plan.
14. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Anne Jordan

INSPECTOR