



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2019

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/19/3236503
29 Spencer Road, Twickenham TW2 5TZ

- 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 Kevin Brown against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 19/1414/HOT, dated 01 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Pope's Avenue Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a modern 3 storey dwelling at the end of a short terrace. It is part of a group of similar properties on Spencer Road, between Walpole Gardens and Pope's Avenue. Notwithstanding the stepped building lines, the similar front elevations, matching materials and open frontages result in a distinctive and consistent character and appearance. No 29 and the group of which it forms part are in the Pope's Avenue Conservation Area (the CA).
4. The core of the CA includes the distinctive and cohesive collection of detached and semi-detached villas dating from the 19th century on the east side of Pope's Avenue and the north side of Pope's Grove. Following the extension of the CA in 2019 to include areas to the west and south, the significance of the CA now additionally derives from the range of ages and styles of properties which collectively tell the story of the development of the area over time. In this context, the group of properties which includes No 29 makes a neutral contribution to the significance of the CA.
5. The proposed extension would be wider and deeper than it would be tall, and it would be wider than No 29. Therefore, it would be a somewhat squat and bulky form of development which would be out of scale and out of proportion with the host property. Moreover, neither the windows in the front elevation nor the rooflights would match the windows in the host property in terms of their size or alignment. Therefore, notwithstanding that its roof would be aligned with the

- single storey monopitch roof along the front of the properties, the extension would not respect or relate well to the appeal property.
6. No 29 is widely separated from the neighbouring property No 27A by its garden and the shared path which leads to the rear of the properties. Although the extension would be set in from the side boundary, the close approach of its gable end to No 27A would nevertheless diminish the separation gap and enclose the path. Moreover, by virtue of its proximity, the proposal would be seen in juxtaposition with the large 2 storey side extension to No 27A. Notwithstanding the use of similar materials, the proposal would be markedly different from the adjacent extension including in terms of its size and scale, roofscape and its relationship to its host. Consequently, the proposal would be a discordant and incongruous feature and it would not make a positive contribution to the street scene.
 7. Therefore, the proposal would not relate well to No 29 or to the surrounding built environment. It would disrupt the harmony of the group and it would not contribute to distinctive local character. By virtue of the harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene, the proposal would make a negative contribution and it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. However, the proposal would be modest in the context of the CA as a whole. Consequently, it would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset.
 8. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is clear that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In this respect, the less than substantial harm to the CA must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, No 29 is a private dwelling and the creation of additional living accommodation for the appellant would not be a public benefit. There would be limited economic benefits during the construction phase. However, no public benefits have been demonstrated that would outweigh the harm to the CA. Therefore, the proposal would be in conflict with the Framework.
 9. By virtue of the harm that I have found, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan including Policies LP1 and LP3 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan Adopted July 2018. These require, among other things, that development should be compatible with local character and the townscape including in terms of scale, height, massing and proportions, and that it should conserve and where possible make a positive contribution to the historic environment. It would also conflict with the design guidance and aims of the House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document Adopted May 2015 and the Strawberry Hill Village Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document Adopted January 2018.
 10. I am aware that properties elsewhere in the area have been extended. However, full details of those schemes have not been provided. On the basis of the evidence before me, they nevertheless appear to differ from the appeal scheme in a number of ways including size and scale, relationship to the surrounding built environment and the relevant policy context. I cannot therefore be certain that extensions elsewhere are directly comparable to the appeal scheme and they do not provide a justification for it.

Other Matters

11. The proposal would not unacceptably affect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties. There would be no impacts on highways and the tree to the front of the property could be protected during works. However, these are requirements of the development plan and they are not benefits of the scheme.
12. I appreciate that the proposal is a substantially different scheme to the earlier refused planning application (ref 14/3543/HOT) for a 2 storey side extension. However, for the reasons set out above, the proposal would nevertheless result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. My attention has been drawn to policies in the Framework. Paragraph 200 directs local authorities to look for opportunities for new development in Conservation Areas to enhance their significance. Paragraph 201 which is primarily concerned with the loss of features which make a positive contribution to significance. These are not directly relevant to the appeal proposal, which does not relate to the loss of a building and which would not enhance the significance of the CA.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR