
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2019

by Paul Griffiths BSc(Hons) BArch IHBC

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

Decision date: 03 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/19/3226600

3 Church Street, Twickenham, London TW1 3DH

- 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 Alan Bernard against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref.19/0067/HOT, dated 9 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension to form ground floor WC and shower room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. No.3 Church Street dates from around 1850 and is a Grade II listed building that lies within the Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area. The main issue to be considered, therefore, is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, and, linked to that, whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

3. The proposal would involve the creation of a new opening in the rear wall of the dwelling to house a door, that would lead into a corridor that would occupy the space between the boundary wall and an existing lightwell. The structure would then broaden out to provide a square shower room that would also house a WC and a hand basin.
4. The footprint and the roof of the extension would appear contrived for something so modest in scale and purpose. Moreover, the structure would have an awkward relationship with the adjacent ground floor window, springing from very close to the existing opening, and partly obscuring the window in some views from the garden. Internally, the formation of a door opening in the restricted space between the window opening and the party wall would appear forced, ruining the pleasing proportions of the room. With all those factors in mind, it is plain that the proposal would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.
5. I recognise that the Council does not suggest the proposal would harm the character or the appearance of the conservation area.

6. However, while limited views of the proposal from the public realm would mean any impact on the appearance of the conservation area would be minimal, the character of a conservation area is a more intrinsic quality. To my mind, No.3 is an important constituent of the overall character of the conservation area and the harm that the proposal would cause to its special interest would serve to undermine that overall character.
7. Bearing in mind the workings of sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 these conclusions mean that there is a strong presumption against a grant of planning permission for the development proposed. This approach is reflected in paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which says 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.
8. The harm that would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage assets affected in this case would be less than substantial. Paragraph 196 of the Framework sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
9. The accommodation proposed is intended to bring the dwelling up to Lifetime Homes standard by providing bathroom facilities at ground floor level. An improvement to the housing stock of that type would clearly be a public benefit. However, it is my view that the degree of harm that would be caused by the proposal is of a degree that would not be outweighed by the public benefits. On that basis, the proposal falls foul of the Framework. It would also be contrary to Policy LP 1 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan that requires development to exhibit high architectural quality that respects context, and Policy LP 3 that protects designated heritage assets.
10. For all those reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Griffiths

INSPECTOR