



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2019

by C L Humphrey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/19/3236640

White Horse, 704 Woolwich Road, Greenwich SE7 8LQ

- 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 London Stay Apartments against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 19/2047/F, dated 6 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is 'Construction of a two storey rear extension at first and second floor with roof terrace at third floor, roof extension to create additional storey, retention of Pub on ground floor and change of use of upper floors from Hotel (Class C1) to 14 room HMO (Class Sui Generis).'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:

- (i) The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Thames Barrier and Bowater Road Conservation Area (CA) and the significance of the appeal property, which is a non-designated heritage asset; and
- (ii) Whether the appeal proposal would make appropriate provision for refuse, recycling and parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The CA largely derives its significance from the area's industrial heritage. A locally listed non-designated heritage asset, the appeal property is a 3-storey public house and hotel which occupies a highly prominent corner position on Woolwich Road, a significant movement corridor through the southern part of the CA. The listing description notes it is the 'only surviving historic pub still in use on this stretch of Woolwich Road.' Moreover, with its elaborate decorative façade on the north and east elevations, distinctive Dutch gables and striking double gable roof to the rear, the listing description identifies it as a 'positive contributor building with high townscape value in Thames Barrier & Bowater Road Conservation Area.'

4. The proposed roof would project forward of the existing front roof slope, thus reducing the dominance of the Dutch gables on the main north elevation. It would also compete visually with the gable on the east elevation, reducing its prominence. To the rear, the proposal would entirely subsume the double gable roof. Whilst the proposed roof would be set back slightly, it would nevertheless create an oppressive top-heavy addition which would weaken the building's imposing architectural composition.
5. The height, width, depth and bulky form of the proposed rear extension would fail to respect the subservient nature of this part of the building and would, instead, give rise to a dominant and competing feature. Moreover, the solid to void ratio of the extension would not reflect the fenestration pattern and design of the existing building. The substantial expanse of uninterrupted brick on the rear elevation would appear stark and austere.
6. The appeal property is a prominent landmark building on Woolwich Road and the proposed development would be conspicuous in many views. Intervening deciduous trees, buildings and the elevated footway on the south side of Woolwich Road would only provide partial screening when approaching from the east. Clear views of the building are possible from the north side of Woolwich Road, and also from Clevely Close to the immediate east and south. As this is a route to the nearby Maryon Park it is likely to be well used by pedestrians. Whilst some of these views would be from outside the CA, the building makes a distinguished and positive contribution to its character and appearance.
7. At the time of my site visit, development was underway immediately west of the appeal site. Full details of that scheme are not before me. However, based on the submitted evidence and my on-site observations, it appears to involve a new build scheme on a neighbouring site and, unlike the appeal proposal, does not directly affect the non-designated heritage asset. Moreover, I note the Council's assertion that it was 'approved prior to the area's designation as a conservation area and the adjacent appeal building's designation as a locally listed building.' In any event, I must determine the appeal on its own merits.
8. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the CA and the significance of the appeal property. It would therefore conflict with the design, heritage conservation and enhancement aims of Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan and Policies DH1, DH3, DH(h) and DH(j) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (CS).
9. In the parlance of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) the harm I have identified is less than substantial. Nevertheless, as set out at paragraph 193 of the Framework, '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... This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.' Any harm requires clear and convincing justification. The creation of additional residential accommodation, preservation of the pub use, and retention of the appeal property do not amount to public benefits which convincingly outweigh the harm I have identified, particularly as I have no evidence to demonstrate that such benefits could not be achieved through other, more sympathetic, means.

Refuse, recycling and parking provision

10. The submitted plans do not include refuse or recycling facilities within the appeal site. Whilst the accompanying Design and Access Statement shows a waste area outside the building, this does not lie within the site boundary.
11. I note the appellant's suggestion that waste storage could be located in the basement with street level access via a pulley/lift. However, the development would require a sizeable volume of refuse and recycling storage and I have no evidence to demonstrate that this could be satisfactorily achieved within the building. Provision of a waste storage area outside the building would not be within the appellant's control. Moreover, given its probable scale, it would be likely to impede pedestrian movement along Clevely Close.
12. The plans indicate cycle storage on the lower ground floor of the building. This would require cycles to be carried up and down a flight of stairs and so would not be readily accessible. I note the appellant's suggestion that cycle storage may be located outside in lieu of the vehicular parking shown in the submitted Design and Access Statement. However, that area is outside the site boundary and so not within the control of the appellant. Furthermore, provision of cycle storage structures on the footway would be likely to obstruct the free flow of pedestrian traffic.
13. Given the issues set out above, I am not persuaded that these matters could be properly dealt with through the imposition of planning conditions.
14. For the foregoing reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would not make appropriate provision for refuse, recycling and parking, contrary to the design, amenity protection, waste management and sustainable transport aims of London Plan Policies 5.16, 6.9 and 6.10 and CS Policies DH1 and IM(b).

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

CL Humphrey

INSPECTOR