



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 November 2019

by S. Rennie BSc (Hons), BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/D/19/3238335

29 Chester Row, London SW1W 9JE

- 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 Ms A. Terracina against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 19/05206/FULL, dated 1 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a mansard extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area and the designated Belgravia Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The proposal is for a mansard roof to add an additional storey of accommodation to this terraced dwelling within the CA. The significance of the CA is derived, in part, by the opulent dwellings, wide and verdant streets, and quality traditional architecture of its buildings.
4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas in the exercise of planning functions.
5. No 29 is in a terrace row with very similar character and proportions to the neighbouring three properties (Nos 29 – 35). These dwellings form a distinct group within the terrace and share the same historic roof form, which is a 'butterfly' style low pitch roof behind parapets. The terrace is 'book ended' by the higher four storey corner plot property at 26 South Eaton Place, adjacent to No 29.
6. Nos 29-35 are positive examples within the CA of a uniform terrace row within a longer street (Chester Row), although there are some differences evident to their appearance. Although there is variety of dwelling sizes and roof forms within the full length of Chester Row, the group that is made up by Nos 29-35

display a strong uniformity with a continuous roof form, which I understand is likely to be the original design from the Regency period.

7. In this regard, the 'Roofs' Supplementary Planning Guidance states that roof extensions may be unacceptable in certain circumstances. An example given includes: *"Complete terraces or groups of houses where the existing roof line is largely unimpaired by any extensions or alterations, and where it is considered to be important to retain the integrity of the group as a whole."*
8. In this case, there is a group of houses within a terrace where the existing roofline is unimpaired by extensions or alterations. The proposed mansard roof would detract from the integrity and uniformity of this group as a result, by significantly altering the roof form of just one of this group.
9. To add the proposed mansard roof would visually interrupt the consistency of this particular group of houses and their simple and discreet roof form with a much larger mansard structure at No 29. In this setting, the mansard roof would not, in my opinion, blend in with the roofscape, even if it would remain lower than the adjacent No 26 South Eaton Place. The mansard roof may not be visible from all directions, but it would be at least partially visible behind the parapet wall from some public vantage points along Chester Row and South Eaton Place, for example.
10. The quality of the design, materials and scale of the mansard roof, together with the retention of the 'butterfly' feature to the rear parapet is acknowledged. However, it is how this roof extension would affect the appearance of this section of terrace, resulting in a clearly visible different roof form for No 29 from these other properties within the group, that is the particular issue in this case.
11. There are many other examples of mansard roofs within Belgravia CA which I observed, some of which may well be extensions, but the consistent and uniform roofs of the particular group of dwellings at Nos 29-35 contribute positively to the attractiveness of this section of terrace within Chester Row. Therefore, a roof extension which detracts from these qualities of this group of dwellings also fails to preserve or enhance the character of the CA.
12. The proposed development would therefore be harmful to the character of the CA and would detract from the significance of this heritage asset. Nevertheless, the harm would be less than substantial and in accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework that harm should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.
13. However, there would be no substantive public benefit in the proposed extension. I recognise that this proposed extension would allow for more accommodation for a family dwelling which has limited private amenity space. The addition would also improve the environmental performance of the house. However, these matters would not outweigh the identified harm to the CA, to which I must attach considerable importance and weight.
14. As such, the proposal is contrary to policies S25 and S28 of Westminster City Plan (November 2016) and DES 6 and DES 1; and paragraph 10.108 of policy DES 9; of the Unitary Development Plan, adopted in January 2007. These policies seek to, amongst other things, maintain the character of existing buildings; avoid roof extensions which would adversely affect either the

architectural character or unity of a group of buildings; conserve heritage assets such as CAs; and be of exemplary standards of urban design.

15. The proposal also does not fully accord with the guidance contained within Westminster's 'Roofs' Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

S. Rennie

INSPECTOR