The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 January 2020

by Anne Jordan BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24th January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/Y/19/3223433
26 Woodstock Road, Chiswick, W4 1UF

- 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 Charles Pearce against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- The application Ref 01234/26/L8, dated 2 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2019.
- The works proposed are described as "re-introduce the second floor means of escape which has been removed to provide a escape route from the second floor to the ground floor flat roof at the rear of the property….A 1400mm x 1000mm balcony (to match previous) will be re-introduced and a emergency telescopic ladder (DOC-0001) will be added to the base of the escape balcony".

Procedural Matters

1. Although the original application was made for both planning and listed building consent, the appeal is made for listed building consent only. I can therefore deal only with the matter of listed building consent.

2. The decision issued by the Council referred to a refusal for consent to display advertisements, although it is clear from the reference number, which cross-references with the officer report, and from the description of development, that this would appear to be an administrative error. As the reason for refusal is otherwise clear I consider the refusal to be valid and have proceeded on that basis.

3. The Council amended the description of development to "Re-instatement of a means of escape from the rear of the second floor by replacement of a window with a door and installation of a balcony with an emergency telescopic ladder added to the base (Listed Building Consent)". As this description more accurately and succinctly describes the development, I have also used this description.

Decision

4. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for re-instatement of a means of escape from the rear of the second floor by replacement of a window with a door and installation of a balcony with an emergency telescopic ladder added to the base at 26 Woodstock Road, Chiswick, W4 1UF in accordance with application Ref 01234/26/L8, dated 2 November 2018 and the plans submitted with it and subject to the follow conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

2. The development shall be carried out in all respects in accordance with the following approved plans: location plan, plan ref SK-181102, Design and Access Statement – "Hatch System".

3. The new joinery work shall match the existing joinery adjacent in respect of materials, dimensions and profiles, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Main Issue

5. The main issues for the appeal are the impact of the proposals on the special architectural and historic interest of this Grade II listed building known as 26 Woodstock Road and the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Bedford Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. 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. S72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be had to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area. Policy CC4 of the Hounslow Local Plan (Local Plan) requires that proposals for the alteration or extension of listed buildings do not adversely affect the character of listed buildings, is in keeping with the character of the building and harmonises with its surroundings and the wider character of the area. This reflects the statutory duties defined in the Act.

7. 26 Woodstock Road sits within a short terrace of grade II listed buildings known as 24-34 Woodstock Road. The terrace is made up of 3 and 4 storey properties, constructed in the Queen Anne style, it is built in brick with render bays at first floor and above, which have gabled detailing at roof level. The regular appearance and detailing of the dwellings makes a positive contribution to this part of the Bedford Park Conservation Area. To the rear, the uniformity of appearance that characterises the group has been eroded by piecemeal additions and alterations. Original features including the ornate vertical window to the stairwell has also been removed on some properties, including the appeal property.

8. The significance of the asset lies in its historic importance as part of a speculatively built, Victorian suburb, and as part of a relatively well preserved group of properties of their period and type, as part of a late Victorian speculatively built suburb in the Queen Anne style. The contribution the front façade of the group makes to the streetscene also contributes to its significance.

9. The proposal relates to the installation of a lightweight fire escape to the rear of the property. This would consist of an enclosed metal "landing" with a retractable ladder which would be attached to a full height window at first floor level. To enable access the existing window would be replaced with a door.

10. The window which is proposed for replacement forms part of a long vertical opening which extends between floors and would originally have been

decoratively glazed. On the appeal property, in common with some others nearby, the opening has been filled with full height timber windows which have timber panels towards the base. The replacement of the first floor window with a door of very similar design would have no discernible effect on the rear façade and would not lead to loss of an architectural feature.

11. The detailing of the metal balcony is unfussy and its proportions are modest, so although it would be visible, it would not be unduly prominent. I noted on site that balconies were already in place on the rear of the group. These, and other alterations have had a small erosive effect on the character of the terrace as they are not consistent with a property of this age or type. However, when seen in the context of the various other additions to properties in the terrace, the addition of a further modest and relatively unobtrusive structure, on the less composed rear façade to the group, would not significantly alter the existing character of the property.

12. I take into account the concerns of neighbours, that the proposal would form an undesirable precedent for similar proposals in the future. I have no compelling evidence that this would be the case, or that further such works would be harmful if they did come forward, when in any case, they would be considered on their own merits. Neither would the proposal impact upon the living conditions of neighbours. The "balcony" is small and unlikely to be used for sitting out to any significant extent.

13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not result in harm to the architectural or historic interest of the grade II listed building known as 26 Woodstock Road. Neither would it impact upon the character or appearance of the Bedford Park Conservation Area. It would also not conflict with Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC7 of the Local Plan which together seek development which complements the original building and maintains the character of the surrounding area.

Conclusion and Conditions

14. The proposal would not harm the special interest of the listed building, or lead to harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed. In addition to conditions relating to the approved plans and time limit for implementation, a condition requiring that joinery matches the adjacent joinery below is necessary to ensure an appropriate appearance for the development.

Anne Jordan

INSPECTOR