
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 December 2019

by Andre Pinto BA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/19/3239920
41 Cowick Road, London SW17 8LJ

- 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 Samantha Swann against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2019/3108, dated 15 July 2019 was refused by notice dated 10 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is replacement of rotten timber windows on the front elevation of the property with "like for like" double glazed UPVC units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Totterdown Fields Conservation Area (the CA) and whether any harm to the significance of the CA is outbalanced by any public benefits.

Reasons

3. The CA is characterised by its regular grid pattern, clearly laid out in a planned manner, and by the distinctive architecture of its different terraces formed by groups of individual dwellings composed as single large buildings. This characteristic of the CA is further reinforced by the use of symmetry and consistent detailing across the same group of individual houses, in order to not only form a cohesive terrace, but also to differentiate one terrace from another. The Totterdown Fields Estate is one of the Country's best examples of the Arts & Craft and the Garden City movements, affording it its significance.
4. The appeal site is located in a quiet residential street in the north west section of the CA and is part of a small terrace of symmetrical two storey cottages, which is overall in good condition and relatively unaltered externally. Numbers 41 and 43 Cowick Street, which make up the discrete terrace this appeal refers to, share the same building and roof lines, feature the same type of yellow stock brick and have similar recessed entrance doors and windows. Overall, these features contribute greatly to the harmonious feel of the terrace and the character and appearance of the CA.
5. The development proposed is the replacement of timber windows on the front elevation of the property with double glazed uPVC units. The proposed change

- in materiality, from wood to uPVC, would result in an increase in the thickness of the frames and glazing bars, as well as a change in the depth of the reveal.
6. The development would cause the loss of an original feature of the building as it would not replace the existing windows with like for like. Furthermore, it would be inconsistent with the architectural detailing of 43 Cowick Street, weakening the value and merit of the terrace and causing harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.
 7. Although there are other examples of uPVC windows within the vicinity of the site and throughout the CA, the Totterdown Fields Estate Conservation Area Character Appraisal identified these as having caused harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
 8. The development would not, therefore, preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. Consequently, the proposed development would be contrary to the Framework, Policy 7.8 of the London Plan (2016), Policy DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Local Plan – Development Management Policies Document (2016), the Housing SPD (2016) and the Totterdown Field Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2008).
 9. Considering the significance and prominence of this feature as well as the presence of uPVC windows in other terraces along the same street, the magnitude of this harm is less than substantial. The Framework requires that, where a development proposal leads 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.
 10. No particular public benefits have been brought to my attention in relation to the proposed development, albeit I recognise that there would be some private benefits for the occupants, particularly on energy efficiency and potentially security. I also acknowledge that there would be some public benefit in terms of improving energy efficiency of existing housing stock and that the investment would be of some benefit to the local economy. However, any such public benefits would be very modest given the small scale of the development. These would be substantially outweighed by the relatively significant harm arising, bearing in mind the importance and protection given, by statute and national and local planning policy, to designated heritage assets.

Other Matters

11. The appellant claims, in its Grounds for Appeal, that discussions with the Council have been less than satisfactory and that no contact was made by the Council during the application process. I have not been presented with compelling evidence to support this claim. Therefore, this is not materially relevant to this case and did not affect my decision.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andre Pinto

INSPECTOR