
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/19/3238691
31 Manning Place, Richmond TW10 6LJ

- 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 Giles Allen and Avaline Horthy against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 19/1924/HOT, dated 19 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension and double storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - The character and appearance of the host property, and on the street scene; and
 - The health and longevity of trees on and adjacent to the appeal site.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a three-storey house, at the end of a terrace consisting of two connected pairs of mirror-image properties. It sits among a development of architecturally similar houses and flats arranged around a small cul-de-sac. As a result of the consistent design and appearance of the houses and flats, and the use of symmetry or repeating patterns in the layout, the development as a whole has a neat and orderly character.
4. The proposal is to add a two-storey side extension and single-storey rear extension to the appeal property. The side part of the extension would be approximately 3.5m wide, and so would significantly increase the width of the existing host property which is around 5.4m wide. The Council's 2015 'House Extensions and External Alterations' Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD) advises that, in order to ensure that extensions do not dominate the original building, they should not be greater than half the width of the original building. It is clear from reading the SPD as a whole that the reference to 'half the width of the original building' refers to an individual dwelling rather than

the entire terrace, and the argument that the proposal should be considered acceptable because it would represent only 15% of the overall width of the terrace is therefore not persuasive. While the SPD is guidance rather than development plan policy, it provides a useful benchmark against which proposals can be assessed. The extension in this case would be considerably more than half the width of the existing house and, given its size, its impact would not be lessened by compliance with the advice in the SPD that side extensions should be set at least 1m behind the main elevation of the existing house.

5. The Council has suggested that a flat roof would be more appropriate than the hipped pitched roof proposed. While the large size and subsequent dominant appearance of the extension roof is in my view an inevitable consequence of the extension's width, inasmuch as a narrower extension would not require such a high roof of the same pitch, I must of course make my decision only on the basis of the scheme before me. The size of the hipped roof as proposed would add bulk to the extension. The dominant effect of the extension would also be exacerbated slightly when seen from within Manning Place because of the fall of the land to the north west away from the appeal site. Taken as a whole, the extension would be an over-large addition which would somewhat overwhelm and be unsympathetic to the host building, and which consequently would be harmful to its appearance.
6. From my observations during my site visit and the other information before me, I am not aware of any existing side extensions similar to the current proposal elsewhere within the street. Given this, and taking into account both its size and prominent location within the cul-de-sac, I consider that the proposed extension would also result in a loss of the symmetry and orderliness which is characteristic the buildings and their layout within the street. Because of this it would be detrimental to the Manning Place street scene.
7. I note that the Council has raised no objection to the rear single storey element of the proposal. On the basis of the evidence before me, I consider that element of the proposed development acceptable and see no reason to disagree with the Council's judgement. I also consider that the use of materials and details such as windows to match the host property would, taken in isolation, be appropriate for a side extension and would comply with the advice in the SPD in these regards. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the host building and to the street scene which I have identified.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would conflict with Policy LP1 of the 2018 Richmond upon Thames Local Plan (the RTLP), as well as guidance in the SPD, which together seek to ensure that development proposals including extensions are compatible with and respect local character, design and appearance.

Trees

9. Manning Place contains several large mature trees as well as numerous other smaller trees and shrubs, including some within or close to the appeal site, which make an important contribution to the pleasant character and appearance of the street as a whole. While many of the trees within the street

are covered by a Tree Protection Order¹, the plan provided by the Council pre-dates the construction of the houses on Manning Place and none of the other information before me definitively identifies the protected trees.

10. Two large mature trees in particular are close to the proposed extension, and although no problems are identified with either at present there is the potential for the development to have an impact on their root protection areas. I acknowledge that it may be possible to use construction methods which would safeguard the trees' roots, but although the appellant has referred to an arboricultural report being prepared to demonstrate this it has not been provided to me. On that basis, I am not satisfied that the development could proceed without causing harm to the health and longevity of the trees on and adjacent to the appeal site.
11. The proposal would therefore conflict with RTLP Policies LP1, LP15 and LP16 which, among other things, seek to protect and enhance trees and shrubs and the contribution they make to local character and biodiversity.

Other Matters

12. The positioning and layout of the proposed extension would not lead to any harmful effects on the living conditions of neighbours arising from a loss of daylight, sunlight, privacy or outlook, and the host dwelling would continue to have adequate outdoor amenity space in the rear garden. However, the lack of harm in these matters does not outweigh the other harm I have identified.
13. The appellant's statement indicates that they are unhappy that the Council's decision on the planning application was made earlier than was necessary, and as a consequence was refused for reasons which they consider it may otherwise have been possible to resolve. While I acknowledge the appellant's apparent frustration, this is not a matter which has had any bearing on my decision which I have of course made only on the basis of the evidence before me.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector

¹ London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Tree Preservation Order No 87, January 1974