
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3253135
39H Whitton Road, Hounslow TW3 2DB

- 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 Mr Bugsy Pankhania against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01205/39H/P1, dated 30 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'loft conversion and additional unit to boarding hostel'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for development described as 'loft conversion and additional unit to boarding hostel' at 39H Whitton Road, Hounslow TW3 2DB in accordance with the terms of the application, 01205/39H/P1, dated 30 August 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1908-1203-001, 1908-1203-002, 1908-1203-003, 1908-1203-004, 1908-1203-005, and 1908-1203-006.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in materials to match the host building.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on i) the living conditions of future occupiers having particular regard to internal and external space; and ii) the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Living conditions

3. The appeal site is occupied by a two- and three-storey building that has a lawful Sui Generis use as a boarding hostel¹. The proposal would create two units that fall some way below the adopted internal space standards and would not be provided with any private external space. This weighs against the

¹ LPA ref: 01205/39/P5

proposal as Policy SC5 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 Volume One (LP) seeks to improve the quality of housing in the area through measures including the provision of minimum internal and external space standards.

4. However, Policy SC5 of the LP is also clear that development will be required to meet the demands of everyday life for the intended occupants. The appellant sets out that the existing and proposed units provide basic, emergency living accommodation that is offered on a short-term, temporary basis for homeless and vulnerable people. Within the Council's evidence they acknowledge the on-going use of the site as a boarding hostel. I consider that these are relevant material considerations to which I place substantial weight.
5. Each of the units would provide sufficient room for the occupants to sleep, prepare and eat basic meals and wash. This would provide a safe and secure environment to meet the demands of everyday life for the intended occupants. Furthermore, the accommodation would be consistent with other existing units in the hostel in terms of internal and external space. The Council contends that the boarding hostel use regularly includes relatively long-term stays. However, I have no evidence to substantiate this. Even if occupants were to make use of the facilities for more than a short-term stay, this is unlikely to be comparable to periods of occupation more commonly associated with a C3 use where minimum space standards are of greater significance.
6. Given the use I find that the proposals would meet the demands of everyday life for the intended occupants despite the shortfall against space standards. Therefore, in conclusion on the first main issue I find that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of future occupiers having particular regard to internal and external space. As such, the proposal would not conflict with the overall objective of Policy SC5 of the LP.

Character and appearance

7. From outside the appeal site I have observed a variety of roof pitches and forms. These include steep roofs at 45/47/49 Whitton Road; a mansard-style roof behind a parapet wall at the corner of Whitton Road and Heath Road; and arched dormer windows along Pownall Gardens. As such, whilst the host building is an attractive period property with shallow pitched roofs covered in natural slate, the area is characterised by a wide range of roof forms.
8. The proposal would take design cues from the surrounding environment as well as the host building, for example picking up on the arched header details of the first-floor windows. Furthermore, the proposal would use plain tiles to match the existing, align the dormers with the windows on the floor below, reflect the irregular footprint of the building and retain the existing eaves detail. Additionally, the scale of the proposal would be proportionate, including a maximum height below the adjacent eaves. The proposed extension to the two-storey part of the building would be obscured from view or viewed against the flanking three-storey built form. As such, the proposal would be of a sympathetic design that would assimilate with the context.
9. Therefore, in conclusion on this main issue the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would not conflict with Policies CC1 and CC2 of the LP.

These seek, amongst other aims, to ensure high-quality design that responds to the local vernacular, context and varied character.

Other matter

10. The public consultation process raised one objection concerned with existing anti-social behaviour. However, it is beyond the scope of this appeal to address existing issues, nor have I been provided with substantive evidence to support these concerns. Furthermore, the behaviour of future occupiers is likely to vary from one individual to another, and I have little evidence to indicate that the additional accommodation would lead to anti-social behaviour.

Conditions and Conclusion

11. The Council have suggested a number of conditions, including the standard implementation and approved plans conditions. I find these necessary in order to define the terms of the permission. Furthermore, the Council have requested a pre-commencement condition to require sample material submissions. However, I find that a condition to require the use of matching materials would be sufficient in order to protect the character and appearance of the area. Finally, the Council have suggested a condition to require a construction method statement. However, given the limited scale of the development and the lack of any suggested reason for imposing such a condition I find it unnecessary.
12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR