



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 October 2020

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DiP TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14/10/2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/20/3250188
8 Park Road, Radlett WD7 8EQ

- 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 Mrs Lulu Bernard against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0077/HSE, dated 21 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion to habitable space, and a new dormer to the rear of the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Radlett North Conservation Area.

Procedural Matter

3. The Council's decision and officer report refer to 8 Park Road ('No 8') as forming one half of a semi-detached pair with 6 Park Road. However, as pointed out by the appellant, and confirmed on my visit, the semi-detached pair comprises No 8 and 10 Park Road ('No 10')

Reasons

4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') describes such areas as a 'designated heritage asset'.
5. The appeal site, and much of its surroundings, is within the Radlett North Conservation Area ('RNCA'). According to the Radlett (North) Conservation Area Appraisal 2010 ('CAA'), it falls within Character Zone 3. This area typically contains varied late nineteenth or early twentieth century traditional properties, with significant architectural detailing, and a simple hipped or gabled roof form.

6. Those features, together with the buildings' spacious settings, and their set back from the wide road, often on landscaped plots, all contribute to the area's significance. At page 80 the CAA identifies changes to the buildings' roofs, including the introduction of dormers, as a threat to the RNCA's special character.
7. Although Nos 8 and 10 were constructed as a mirrored pair, the latter has had various alterations. Viewed from the rear, this includes the removal of a chimney, and the introduction of a dormer, an enlarged bay and replacement windows. The pair's appearance will be further altered when an approved single storey rear extension at No 8 is implemented.
8. Notwithstanding that, given their general form and detailing, and as acknowledged in the appellant's grounds of appeal, the pair's rear elevations do still retain a strong sense of symmetrical balance. Whilst No 10 has a dormer, given its horizontal proportions which broadly reflects the fenestration on the floor beneath, and its fairly limited size, it does not draw the eye.
9. In contrast, the proposed rear dormer at No 8 would be significantly larger, and its height and doors would give it a far more vertical emphasis. As a result, notwithstanding its appropriately small window panes, it would dominate the roof to a far greater degree.
10. Consequently, rather than improving the symmetry of the pair, in this elevated position on the roof, the proposal would further unbalance their appearance. Whilst the scheme would be only just visible from Malt Lane, that harmful impact would be seen from the rear gardens of nearby properties.
11. The appellant states that the loft conversion at No 10 is cramped and, having regard to design policies elsewhere, that a larger dormer than that is required so that the room can comfortably accommodate a single bed with adequate lighting. However, from the limited available evidence, I am not persuaded that this scheme is the only way in which a suitable habitable room here could be achieved.
12. The Council's decision refers to Policy CS14 of the Hertsmere Core Strategy 2013, and Policy SADM29 of the Hertsmere Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016. In general terms, they require development to be high quality and, taking account of conservation area appraisals, to be sensitively designed to conserve and enhance the historic environment; and having regard to cumulative impacts, not to harm conservation areas. For the above reasons, the scheme would conflict with that approach.
13. In harming this part of the RNCA the scheme would harm the designated heritage asset as a whole. In accordance with the Framework, I have given great weight to the conservation of the RNCA. However, applying its paragraph 196, the harm caused to it would be less than substantial, and I am therefore required to weigh it against the scheme's public benefits.
14. The proposal would provide additional living accommodation. However, even if that is a public benefit, it would be very modest, and I am not persuaded that this scheme is the only way in which it could be achieved.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. Summing up, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the RNCA. Although I have found that the harm caused would be less than substantial, it would not be outweighed by public benefits.
16. The scheme would conflict with the development plan, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR