



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2020

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Decision date: 22 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/W/20/3257108
16-18 West Road, London SW4 9NU

- 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 Nick Jepp against the decision of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 20/00470/FUL, dated 4 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is the creation of mansard roof extension to Nos. 16 and 18 West Road, Clapham
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the locality, including the appeal building, the setting of nearby non-designated heritage assets at Nos. 71 and 73 Park Hill; and the Clapham Park Road/ Northbourne Road Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCA), in respect of development affecting conservation areas, states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and/or appearance of the area.
4. The CA's significance is related to the collection of formally laid out grand nineteenth century detached and semi-detached villas by renowned architect Thomas Cubitt who sought about designing a 'garden suburb' for wealthy residents. Consequently, the CA has a strong sense of grandeur in the built form, as well as a sense of spaciousness in and around buildings. These spaces are well vegetated with an emphasis of trees and gardens generating a 'leafy' and spacious green character. The dwellings which make up the CA are predominantly grand in their design and appearance, such as nearby Northbourne Road with villas constructed of London Stock brick and three storeys tall with an exposed basement and large cross-axial chimney stacks. Along Park Hill, the grandeur of villas continues, with Nos 71 and 73 being of particular note with Italianate styled stucco front facades with arched headed windows, bracketed corbelling to the soffits and pierced parapet which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the locality.

5. The use of traditional materials such as timber, brick and slate along with the similar roof pitches such as hipped and pitched, gabled and London Butterfly roofs and designs reinforce a uniformity and authenticity which creates a formal picturesque townscape along with vegetated front gardens and street trees give a spacious, leafy, uncluttered and distinctive character. Other buildings constructed within the next few centuries add to the eclectic mix of fragmented development in the area. To the rear of dwellings which are experienced along West Street, the leafy character continues with the majority of gardens being well vegetated which can be witnessed through the gaps in and around the buildings.
6. There are examples of modern infill such as the appeal site which was constructed in the last decade and is two storey construction with basement and a shallow pitched hipped roof with London stock brickwork. The buildings appear to have been constructed in the former rear gardens of 71 and 73 Park Hill and has a positive role within the conservation area and allows surrounding historic buildings and street scene to dominate the character and experience of the CA. The appeal site buildings, due to their lower height, massing and form have a subservient appearance which have a smaller outbuilding-like form to the rear of 71 and 73 Park Hill with the former gardens still being decipherable. These elements reinforce the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the area.
7. In undertaking extensions to buildings within CAs, Policy Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2015 (LP) seeks that design respects and reinforces the established positive characteristics of the area, including height, form, materials, and detailing amongst others. Other relevant policies such as Q11 of the LP also seek that extensions positively respond to existing architecture and its detailing, as well as Policy Q5 which seeks that proposals reinforce local distinctiveness and the local context. The Lambeth Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) supports these local plan policies and seeks that residential additions achieve subordination and protect the design integrity of the host building.
8. Whilst there are examples of mansard roofs in the surrounding area, they are not characteristic on modern buildings within the locality. Nos. 71, 73 and 74 Park Hill have mansard roofs as detailed in the applicant's SoC, these are historic buildings and the roof form is integral and proportionate to their design. This is not the case for the appeal site, where the proposal would elongate the existing shallow pitched roof form and give an elongated and awkward appearance and relationship to the appeal building. This uncomfortable juxtaposition would cause distraction from the experience of the surrounding historic environment which includes the significance and setting of Nos. 71 and 73 Park Hill. The roof form would not be proportionate and together with the proposed roof terraces would give a discordant massing, clutter and visual bulk to the existing buildings which would disrupt the hierarchy and experience of the surrounding historic buildings, in particular to the rear of 71 and 73 Park Hill which has a historic relationship to the appeal site.
9. The Applicant refers to 1 Mayfield Close located opposite the appeal site as justification for the increase in roof height of the appeal site. However, this dwelling is not experienced within the same context as the appeal site where the appeal site has a historic relationship to the rear of 71 and 73 Park Hill. No. 1 Mayfield Close also has a dual pitched roof which is sympathetic to its

form and scale, as opposed to the construction of the mansard roof to the appeal buildings which is uncharacteristic. I also note the inclusion within the applicant's SoC of supplementary planning information in the form of a views assessment¹, however the visualisations do illustrate the inappropriateness of the increased roof height when seen within the locality. It is also noted that the assessment of harm towards heritage assets is not limited to views alone, nor is harm limited to consideration of only the public realm. An assessment of harm to heritage assets needs to consider the tangible and intangible elements and relationships which make up the heritage value of an asset which can be from a public or private realm perspective.

10. Overall, the proposed extension would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, as required by Section 72 of the PLBCA. Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also requires that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to their significance.
11. Although serious, the harm to the CA in this case would be 'less than substantial,' within the meaning of the term in paragraph 196 of the Framework. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 requires that, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I have also taken into account weight attributed to harm caused to the significance of 71 and 73 Park Hill as a result of development within their setting in accordance with Paragraph 197 of the Framework.
12. The applicant's SoC notes that public benefits include the shortage of large homes, the 'national interest' as a result of government direction with regards to economic growth and the recent changes to permitted development rights which seek the extension upwards of dwellings which the applicant views should be given substantial weight. The proposal would also deliver economic benefits in terms of short term employment opportunities in the construction of the proposed extension; and depending on the occupants, may increase the socio-economic benefits from local expenditure. The extension does not create new family dwellings, as the two dwellings are already family dwellings; however they would be enlarged with an additional bedroom each. This would result in the improvement of existing housing stock which would be of a limited public benefit. The recent changes to permitted development to enable the nation to extend upwards excludes areas such as CAs, so the national interest which is attributed by the Applicant or relevance to this appeal site is limited. Taken together, these public benefits would not be sufficient to balance against the great weight that is attributed to the harm that would arise from the proposed development. Specifically, that in respect of the special regard to be given to the character and appearance of the CA.
13. Overall, I therefore find that there would be insufficient public benefit to offset the identified harm and the development does not accord with the Framework. It follows that the proposal would fail to comply with LP Policies Q5, Q11 and Q22, as mentioned previously, each of which are also supported by the SPD.

¹ By 21st Architecture Ltd

Conclusion

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

J Somers

INSPECTOR