



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2020

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/W/20/3250260

Flat E, 214 Gloucester Terrace, London W2 6HU

- 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 Joshua Harrison (Jadeplant Forest Ltd) against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 19/08359/FULL, dated 28 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2020.
 - The development proposed was initially described as "loft conversion and alterations and rear extension".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. At Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the existing building and the Bayswater Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Gloucester Terrace is a street of urban residential character that features long terraces of generally uniform scale. Although some of the terraces have been adapted and extended, the terrace that hosts the appeal site remains largely consistent in appearance, featuring repetitive and refined detailing to the front. The flat that is the subject of this appeal comprises of the top two floors of the building at the end of its terrace which, as a result of its positioning, is prominent in views along Gloucester Terrace and from the endmost part of Porchester Square. Each building within the terrace features a 4 storey, flat roofed projection at the rear and a recessed top floor of accommodation between tall parapets. The rear projections are visible from the adjacent Ranelagh Bridge and the roads and railway line to the rear of the site and, from those vantage points, the abovementioned features give the terrace a repetitive and rhythmical appearance.
5. The terrace sits within the Bayswater Conservation Area which my site visit and the evidence before me indicates derives its significance from the formal and planned layout of the built form and the prevalent classical architecture. As a result of the

positioning of the terrace and the part of the building that is the subject of this appeal, they are prominent features of the Conservation Area and play a substantial role in defining the character and appearance of the edge of the Conservation Area. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6. The proposal would involve the provision of an additional floor of accommodation above the existing projection at the rear of the building. The extension would be inset from the existing elevations of the projection, would feature a flat roof and brick to the elevations. This extension would cause the projection to be substantially taller than all other comparable projections at the terrace, thereby disrupting the repetitive and rhythmical appearance of the terrace. Views of the extension from the public domain would be limited to views from outside the Conservation Area and the materials proposed to be used would limit the extent to which the extension would be noticeable in longer views. Moreover, the proposal would not affect the front elevation of the building. However, the disruption to the appearance of the terrace would detract from the contribution that it makes to the Conservation Area.
7. The proposal would also involve the rearward extension of the roof accommodation with the pitched roof and dormers being replaced with a mansard roof with steeper pitches to the front and rear and dormers of shallower depth. This element of the proposal would also disrupt the largely consistent form and appearance of the terrace. Due to the height relative to the road and the setback from the front elevation, the alterations at the front part of the accommodation would not be seen from the public domain immediately adjacent to the appeal site. However, the extension would be visible in longer views and from the rear, particularly from the footways at the adjacent bridge where the extension would be prominent and cause noticeable disruption to the consistent roof forms of the majority of the terrace. Consequently, the extension would detract from the repetitive appearance of the building and reduce the contribution that it makes to the rhythm of the terrace and character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
8. Although one other building within the terrace has been the subject of a roof extension, no details are before me of the planning history of that development and, in any case, the extension is not of comparable prominence. Similarly, whilst the terrace at the opposite side of Ranelagh Bridge features several extensions and alterations, they do not alter my assessment of the effect of the proposal on the terrace that the appeal site is a part of, which has retained a far more consistent appearance than the neighbouring terrace and, therefore, makes a greater contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
9. Whilst those passing the rear of the site in moving vehicles are likely to pay limited attention to the building and the Conservation Area and Ranelagh Bridge is unlikely to be regularly used by pedestrians, these factors do not alter my assessment of the effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Moreover, although the terrace is not a listed building, I do not find that this diminishes its value to the Conservation Area to an extent that leads me to a different conclusion in respect of the harm caused to the heritage asset.
10. For the reasons set out above, both parts of the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. I afford significant weight to that harm. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) requires that, where less than substantial harm is identified, it is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this regard the appellant has identified that the proposal would enable the disrepair and dereliction of the existing unoccupied flat to be rectified. However, it has not been demonstrated that the condition of the building is such

that this represents a benefit that I should afford more than a little weight or that the proposed extensions would be a proportionate means of bringing about any benefit arising in that respect. Consequently, I do not find that this aspect of the proposal represents a public benefit that outweighs the harm caused to the heritage asset.

11. For the reasons given above, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and the Bayswater Conservation Area. Consequently, the development would be contrary to Policies S25 and S28 of the Westminster City Plan (2016) which, together, require that heritage assets are conserved and that development incorporates exemplary standards of architecture. The proposal would also be contrary to Policies DES1, DES6 and DES9 of the City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan (2007) which, together, require that development is of the highest standard in terms of architectural quality, identifies the types of development that are acceptable in the interests of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and states that development may be refused where the development would adversely affect the architectural character or unity of a building or group of buildings.
12. Furthermore, the development would not accord with the Framework which requires the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment unless any less than substantial harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development.

Conclusion

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

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR