



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2021

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/20/3259826

101 Archway Street, Barnes, London SW13 0AN

- 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 Michelle Smith against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 20/1194/HOT, dated 30 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as the replacement of the defective butterfly pitched roof and construction of a new warm deck flat roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The development has already been undertaken and also involves the construction of a parapet wall at the rear of the roof and coping stones around the parapet wall.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effects of the proposal on the building and on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to this 2-storey, mid-terraced house which is located within a residential area. The property is within the Thorne Passage Conservation Area and is identified by the Council as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM). In addition, the terrace of properties at Nos 87-113 Archway Street are included within an Article 4 Direction which restricts permitted development rights, including those to the roof.
5. The other properties within the terrace have roofs which are pitched front and rear with a central ridge running parallel to the street. The appeal property has a distinctive appearance wherein the roof form is disguised from the front by a parapet wall which rises above the eaves of the neighbouring properties. Although the development has already been undertaken, I can see from the submitted documents that the previous roof form had a central valley running front-to-rear, referred to as a butterfly roof.

6. It is readily acknowledged that the alterations to the roof cannot be seen from the road at the front of the property. To the rear of the property is Thorne Passage which is a public footpath. Notwithstanding the appellant's repeated claims that public views of the rear are not possible due to foliage, I had no trouble seeing the rear of the property, including the roof, when I walked along Thorne Passage. I would expect that such views may be reduced when the trees are in leaf but this still leaves a substantial part of the year when views are as I witnessed. In addition, it is clear that a number of the adjacent and facing neighbouring residents would be able to view the rear of No 101 from within the gardens and in some cases from their houses. Whilst these are views gained from private properties, they are, nevertheless, positions where residents could appreciate the character and appearance of the conservation area and the qualities of the BTM.
7. The Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled 'Buildings of Townscape Merit' and has also published a Conservation Area Study. The SPD indicates that the removal of original or characteristic features, or the introduction of unsympathetic ones can have an unacceptable effect not only on the quality of one building but also on the character and interest of an area. The Conservation Area Study adds that the loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations is a problem as well as poor and disproportionate roof additions.
8. I consider that the previous roof form of the building was part of what made it distinctive and made it stand out within the area. Furthermore, it is a traditional form of roof which can be seen in many older parts of London. Whilst I acknowledge that the main public views of the building are from the front, the views of the rear are important in my judgement and would be where the distinctive roof form could be appreciated. The loss of this feature has a negative effect on the quality of the building and reduces the contribution that it makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As a result, I find that the development conflicts with Policies LP 1, LP 3 and LP 4 of the Council's Local Plan 2018.
9. The appellant states that the development was undertaken due to problems with the previous roof which led to water penetration. Whilst I have no reason to doubt this, I consider that a solution could have been arrived at without compromising the character and appearance of the building and area. There is nothing before me which suggests that the appeal proposal represents the only solution.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 193 that, when considering the impact of development on a designated heritage asset (in this case, the conservation area) great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether the harm amounts to substantial harm or less than substantial harm. In my view, the level of harm would be less than substantial. The NPPF adds that any such harm should require clear and convincing justification. In relation to less than substantial harm, this should be weighed against any public benefits. From what I have read, I can find no public benefits sufficient to outweigh the harm that I identify.

Conclusion

11. The development has an unacceptable effect on the BTM and on the conservation area, for the reasons set out. There are no benefits arising from the proposal which outweigh such harm. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

S T Wood

INSPECTOR