



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2021

by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/20/3255187

62 Thrale Road, London SW16 1NY

- 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 Gill against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2020/0859, dated 4 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is extension to existing building to form 2 additional apartments.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect on the character and appearance of the host property and whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Streatham Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a detached Victorian villa which is subdivided into four flats. It has a rear single storey extension but otherwise retains its original balanced composition and original features, including chimney stacks and double height bay windows. It is situated wholly within the Streatham Park Conservation Area (CA). Under Section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I am required to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
4. From the evidence, including the Streatham Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAAMS), the CA is generally characterised by groups of detached and semi-detached late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses which are surrounded and interspersed by pockets of woodland and green landscaping, including trees that give the impression of the common (Tooting Bec Common) flowing into the area. The CA is modest in scale and has a very green, pleasant, suburban character with a low density of housing overall, with generous spacing and garden sizes. These collective characteristics and the sum of all buildings and spaces define the significance of the CA, with only few buildings being individually important enough to merit formal or local listing.
5. The appeal dwelling fits into the prevailing character of the CA as it is a late Victorian villa set within a group alongside Nos 56, 58 and 60. They are mainly

three storey, of red or yellow brick construction with projecting bays and tile hanging. There are very few villas along Thrale Road that have been deliberately included within the CA but the appeal building is one such specifically-selected villa and it is noted as making a positive contribution thereto. It therefore contributes to the overall significance of the CA.

6. The proposal would involve a number of extensions to the building at first, second (including roof) and ground level on the rear and sides and would result in a building containing 7 apartments. A number of extensions to the building have already been permitted¹ to result in a scheme that would achieve 6 apartments (2 additional units). The consideration of the proposal therefore focusses on the first and second floor extensions, including alterations to the roof, that do not currently have the benefit of planning permission.
7. The current proposal would result in the removal of the rear section of roof, including an existing chimney stack and dormer window. The rear elevation would also be removed and the new extension would project 2.9 metres beyond the existing rear building line. The increased roof ridge height, in the order of 0.4 metres higher, would be repositioned to run from front to back.
8. Due to the degree of additional bulk added by the extension and the degree to which the effects on its overall form, bulk and mass would be visible from the rear from Ullathorne Road, the proposal would harm the host building and wider CA. The altered proportions and loss of original fabric and features from the more visible upper parts of the building would undermine the building's contribution to the CA, particularly as these would be seen in combination with a number of other lower additions to the side and rear.
9. Whilst the appellant indicates that these changes would be on the more discreet rear elevation, it is clear that it would still be more visible within the public realm. From the photograph of the appeal property within the CAAMS, the changes to the rear would be visible from the viewpoint at an angle to the side of the building, where it would be seen in combination with the 1.5 storey side extension. Despite the distance of the viewer from the extensions, and notwithstanding the representation produced in the CGI, the collective effects of the changes visible to the rear would be plainly obvious compared to the discreet and well-proportioned building that would be maintained without the proposed first floor and higher extensions in situ.
10. Whilst the appellant indicates that the proposal would only represent an increase in height of 3% and an increase in depth of 27%, these are still considerable additions. That the proposal would result in an increase in height at all indicates that it is not ideally subservient and that it would span the full width of the rear indicates that it would be seen as a voluminous addition. In my opinion, the first floor rear building line is not so established across dwellings within the linear form of Thrale Road that the proposal would not protrude beyond it. Rather, the appeal building appears as a smaller building in context with its neighbours and an enlarged rearward projection at that level would result in a sense of irregularity. Other factors which further indicate harm include the removal of the existing rear dormer window which is symmetrical with that within the front roof plane.

¹ Planning permission reference 2019/4774

11. As such, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and would also fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA. It therefore conflicts with, in particular, Policies PL1 and IS3 of the Core Strategy² and Policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the DMPD³. These Policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development provides a high quality, sustainable design and layout; sustains the significance, appearance, character and setting of heritage assets, and in respect of rear extensions, seeks to ensure that they are subservient to the original house. For similar reasons, the proposal would also conflict with the CAAMS which seeks to ensure that the special elements that make up the CA are maintained.
12. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the harm to the CA would be 'less than substantial' and towards the lower end of such a scale. Paragraph 196 of the Framework sets out that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, i.e. the CA, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
13. The public benefits of the proposal include the provision of an additional unit of housing and any minor additional economic uplift from the construction phase and subsequent occupation that could not be derived from the extant fallback scheme. Considered in the context of the already permitted fallback scheme which would achieve an uplift of two units of housing, the additional benefits are not of a scale sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified.

Planning balance and conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. It would also result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset.
15. The optimisation of the site to provide a further unit of accommodation and an increased ratio of larger 2 and 3 bedroom units to 1 bedroom units would assist with the achievement of the aims of the Framework. However, it would do so at the expense of the character and appearance of the host building and CA. Given the great weight that should be attached to any loss of significance of a heritage asset, the public benefits fall short of outweighing the identified harm.
16. Whilst the appellant highlights a range of other policies with which the proposal may be compliant, none of these factors or the absence of other harm is sufficient to outweigh the identified conflict.
17. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR

² Wandsworth Local Plan - Core Strategy (2016)

³ Wandsworth Development Management Policies Document (2016)