
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 January 2021

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/20/3254659

2 Argyll House, Ham Street, Richmond TW10 7HD

- 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 Jacek Zajac against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 20/0454/FUL, dated 25 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a roof extension- new dormer, loft conversion to habitable space, two roof windows facing front, one roof window facing side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of proposed development cited on the planning application form differs from that which is contained in the decision notice and appeal form. As the former is a more accurate description of the appeal proposal before me, that is relied upon for the banner heading above.
3. There is a discrepancy between the date cited on the planning application form and that on the decision notice. I have relied upon the former, being the date stipulated by the appellant. The appeal proceeds on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the host property, with particular regard to the siting, width, scale and design of the proposed dormer extension.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. This first floor, semi-detached flat is set within a leafy residential area. It forms part of a row of buildings, designed to be of a consistent character and appearance in terms of scale, form, fenestration pattern and materials.
6. The existing hipped roof structure helps to define the character and appearance of the appeal building. This was free from additions or alterations. Visually, the more subservient interconnecting roofs over the front projection and rear

outrigger contribute to the appeal building's overall symmetry, balance and consistency with its neighbouring peers. The consistency in design extends to the pattern of openings in terms of positioning and size of window openings. The appeal site is not a building of heritage significance. Nonetheless, these credentials are important parts of the building's character and appearance which sets it apart from other properties in the area.

7. A narrow pedestrian walkway runs to the side of the host property which allows very limited close up glimpses of the host's rear elevation. This is because of the height and density of the existing boundary fencing and vegetation. Visibility of the rear elevation of the appeal site is therefore limited to more oblique or direct facing views from neighbouring residential properties to the rear. Nonetheless, the front and exposed side elevation of the appeal building, including the full side profile of the existing roof form, is visible from vantage points along Ham Street itself.
8. The width of the proposed dormer relative to that of the building's existing ridge would be comparable. Coupled with its positioning relative to the appeal building's party boundary, existing ridgeline and eaves, the proposed dormer extension would be of a very large scale.
9. Moreover, the proposed dormer would disturb the existing visually symmetry and balance of both the rear elevation and the side profile of the building. The latter would be evident from Ham Street. Despite the proposed tile hanging to match the existing roof covering, the dormer's side elevation would not be capable of being read as another projecting pitched roof. This is because of the proposed bargeboard detailing. Furthermore, the rear outrigger would not adequately obscure and minimise that visual impact.
10. Consequently, the proposed dormer extension would represent an unsympathetic addition which would unduly dominate the existing rear roof plane and wider rear elevation. This would represent a significant interruption to the otherwise simple roof form.
11. The proportions and positioning of the building's existing openings help define its existing character and appearance. In terms of design, the practical requirements governing the desire to introduce doors and Juliet balconies at roof level are understood. Nonetheless, these would be jarring with the hierarchy of the building's openings. This is because of the larger proportions proposed and the significant reduction in the strong solid to void ratio of the existing rear elevation that would result.
12. For all of these reasons, overall, the appeal proposal would not successfully marry traditional and contemporary design.
13. The fact that the proposed dormer would be on a less publicly visible elevation does not diminish the fact that it would represent an inappropriate alteration that would intrude upon and adversely affect the building's important character and appearance.
14. My attention has been drawn to a number dormer roof extensions within the vicinity of the appeal site. Indeed, the appeal proposal would have some similarities with some of these to varying degrees. The submitted evidence does not sufficiently advance the timings and any similarities in their individual circumstances which led to their being. Furthermore, those properties have a

different character and appearance to the appeal property and they are set within a greater and more continuous expanse of roof.

15. Regardless, the Council's supplementary planning document 'House Extensions and External Alterations (May 2015)' states that roof extensions should be in scale with the existing structure and should not dominate the original roof. A significant area of the existing roof should be left beneath and on either side of a new dormer, thus setting the extension well in from either side of the roof. Dormer windows should be smaller than that of the windows of the floor below and should not interrupt the roof profile. Furthermore, different windows may provide for a particular need but will do little to create a well-mannered unified exterior. This guidance attracts weight. The appeal proposal does not accord with it and consequently that conflict weighs against it.
16. For these reasons, the appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property, with particular regard to the siting, width, scale and design of the proposed dormer extension.
17. Policy LP1 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan (July 2018) states that the Council will require all development to be of a high architectural quality. Development should be compatible with local character, including scale, proportions and form amongst other things. It also confirms that all proposals, including extensions, will be assessed against supplementary planning documents relating to character and design.
18. In view of the identified harm, the appeal proposal would conflict with this policy.

Other Matters

19. I concur that the proposed rooflights would be appropriate in terms of their size and positioning.
20. Given, the limited visibility from public vantage points and surrounding tree cover, I have no cause to dispute the assessment that the appeal proposal would not be so prominent within the wider street scene as to impose unacceptable harm in that regard.
21. From the submitted evidence, I am satisfied that the appeal proposal would not be harmful to living conditions.
22. However, none of these matters would out-weigh the harm that I have found to the character and appearance of the building itself and the subsequent conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole.

Conclusion

23. For these reasons, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Dillon

INSPECTOR