The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2021

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 March 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/H5390/W/20/3262526
37 Munster Road, London SW6 4ER

- 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 Safestore Properties Ltd against the decision of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Council.
- The application Ref 2020/01795/FUL, dated 15 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2020.
- The development proposed is demolition of a single storey metal clad loading bay building and replacement with a new single storey brick built extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellant has drawn my attention to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Council's (the Council) decision notice which makes erroneous reference to the Central Fulham Conservation Area rather than the Fulham Park Gardens Conservation Area (the CA) in its reason for refusal. However, the appellant has dealt with this in their appeal submission and as this also reflects the material submitted for this appeal by the Council I have, likewise, determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area and the setting of the CA.

Reasons

4. The proposal is for an approximately 13.5m tall brick built building, with a metal top that would take the form of single storey extension to a complex of what appears to be early 20th Century and later buildings, that are used by the appellant as a self-storage business. The proposed extension would replace an existing shorter metal storage structure located in the service yard of the appeal property.

5. The appeal property is bounded on one side by a railway viaduct, with the entrance to the service yard adjacent to the railway where it bridges the street and a white building that forms the main street frontage of the self-storage business on Munster Road. On the side opposite the railway, the site is

bounded by an access road to a block of flats at William Banfield House and Housing at Munster Court. To the rear, the appeal site backs on to the rear gardens of semi-detached houses at Fulham Park Gardens. The boundary between the appeal site and these gardens forms part of the boundary to the adjacent CA, that is predominantly defined by a planned development of 19th Century 3 storey semi-detached and terraced housing.

6. The CA is a heritage asset to which I have a statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. I must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

7. The proposed extension is in form similar to an extant planning approval[1] for a brick built single storey building in the same location on the appeal site, but with the addition of the metal structure to its upper part that would also form its roof.

8. At approximately 13.5m in height the proposed extension would appear to be very slightly taller than the other buildings and structure on the site, and unlike the previously approved extension would project above the eaves of the buildings adjacent. The bulk of the upper metal element of the proposed extension would be massed as a box like metal structure with a very shallow hipped roof form, which would not reflect the more traditional steeply pitched roof forms to be found on the other buildings on the rest of the appeal site.

9. The upper metal element and roof of the proposed extension would be most apparent from Munster Road, when viewed through the entrance to the service yard, where it would be seen in combination with the other parts of the complex of buildings that make up the appeal site. Although it would be very visible from trains on the viaduct, opportunity for views of the proposal from other street level vantage points would appear to be minimal. From my site visit it would appear that the proposal would only be very slightly or not at all visible from street level from within the CA. However, the upper metal element and roof of the proposed extension would be apparent in views from the upper floors of neighbouring residential properties including those within the conservation area.

10. The roofscape of the local area that is made up of traditional steeply set pitched and hipped roof forms, with chimneys and roof lanterns, including those existing on the appeal site. From the viewpoints I have identified, the upper metal element and roof of the proposed extension would be visually intrusive and would, due its box like massing and very shallow hipped roof form, appear as a bulky and incongruous element when viewed within the context of this roofscape.

11. For these reasons I find that the proposed extension would cause harm to the character and appearance of the local area and would be harmful to the setting of the CA, which for the purposes of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) would be less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. This would be contrary to Policies DC1, DC4 and DC8 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (2018) and Key Principle CAG 3 of the Hammersmith and Fulham Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2018), which collectively seek to ensure

[1] Council Planning Ref: 2019/02763/FUL

that extensions are of a high standard of design, reflect the scale and character of the existing development, respect and enhance its townscape and conserve and enhance heritage assets including their setting. For these reasons the proposal would also not accord with sections 12 and 16 of the Framework.

12. The proposed extension would allow for an increase in the volume of self-storage space available on the site. The appellant has indicated that this would increase their volume of business and thereby provide additional storage services to client businesses that would create possible additional employment opportunities. However, these have not been quantified in the material submitted for this appeal by the appellant. Given the nature of the self-storage business I would, however, expect direct employment opportunities to be relatively minimal in relation to the scale of the proposal.

13. The appellant has argued that, due to viability issues, which the appellants submission does not detail, the dismissal of this appeal would not result in the implementation of the extant planning permission for an 11m tall extension on the same footprint. However, I find that the extant planning permission could constitute a viable fallback position for the expansion of business use on the appeal site and, potentially, employment opportunities.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. In general, planning decisions should be made in the wider public interest. In this context, the harm I have identified, including the less than substantial harm to the CA outweighs the benefits to employment and of additional business space identified. Dismissing the appeal is a proportionate response in this instance.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR