
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2021

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/Y/20/3262293

175 Whiteladies Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2RY

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Martin Lloyd against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01007/LA, dated 3 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as replace the current valley roof with a new attic roof, to form two bedrooms and to form a new bathroom over the present rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. This decision concerns an appeal against the Council's refusal of an application for listed building consent. Though the submissions reference a related planning application, numbered 20/01006/F, which was also refused by the Council, this has not been appealed. It is not the purpose of this decision to consider the potential merits of such an appeal were it to be lodged.
3. The decision notice cites Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act, which set out duties with regard to listed buildings and conservation areas. As Section 66 concerns applications for planning permission, the relevant sections in this case are 16(2) and 72(1). This is reflected in my definition of the main issues below.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the scheme would preserve a Grade II listed building, or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Whiteladies Road Conservation Area (the Conservation Area).

Reasons

5. 175 Whiteladies Road forms part of a 12-unit terrace of stepped profile numbered 171-189 Whiteladies Road and 2 and 3 Lower Redland Road, which is the listed building in this case. Insofar as it is relevant to this Appeal, the special interest and significance of the listed building resides in its c.1840 date, the overall uniformity of its original design and construction, its group value with other terraces of similar date, and its high degree of prominence within the streetscene.

6. The listed building is also located within the Conservation Area. Insofar as it is relevant to this appeal, the significance of the Conservation Area resides in the historic layout of development along and within streets to either side of Whiteladies Road, and the collection and interrelationship of historic buildings and spaces these contain. As noted above, the listed building is a prominent historic feature, which is furthermore conspicuous within the foreground of far reaching views across Bristol from the upper end of Whiteladies Road. As such it makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.
7. Whilst the 2 units at the centre of the terrace stand at 4 storeys, others, including No 175, stand at 3 storeys. The latter predominantly retain their original butterfly roofs, and some, including No 175, their original pantile finishes. These roofs are concealed across the frontage by parapets, draining to the rear via central valley gutters. As features of the original design of the terrace, which are typical of the period, these roofs make an important contribution to the special interest and significance of the listed building. This is unaltered by the fact that the roofs were not designed to be exposed to general public view, or the fact that most cannot therefore be viewed from within the public realm. Indeed, listed buildings are safeguarded on the basis of their inherent architectural and historic value, irrespective of whether or not public views are available. It is otherwise of note that the roof of the listed building can be clearly identified using freely available satellite and aerial imagery.
8. The scheme would involve the wholesale removal of the original roof structure and associated fabric at No 175. It would be replaced with a roof of completely different form, with a different covering, at a greater height, with accompanying changes to the parapet detail to the rear, and to the internal layout. The works would thus entail considerable loss of historic and architectural integrity, in terms of both fabric and design. This would harm No 175 and the contribution that it makes to the special interest and significance of the terrace as a whole, whether or not examples of replacement roofs can be identified elsewhere within the terrace or the broader area.
9. The appellant claims that the replacement roof would not be exposed to general public view. But, whilst this might be the case in pavement views immediately to the front, multiple views of the listed building are available from higher ground within the broader streetscene. These include views across the regular stepped profile of the roof of the building, including No 175. Therefore, presuming that the new roof could be built as proposed, it is likely that it would be at least partially visible. In this regard, it would be a noticeable and intrusive feature, accentuating the harm identified above.
10. My attention has been drawn to the vulnerability of valley gutters to leakage, and some related deterioration of the roof of No 175. Valley gutters clearly do require maintenance, and, if not properly maintained, deterioration can occur. However, the same is true of many other building components, and can be simply avoided or remedied by repair and routine maintenance. The fact that the roof may have leaked does not therefore provide a sound basis upon which to justify the scheme. In any case, the proposed scheme of drainage would not eliminate the vulnerabilities identified, or appear to be any easier to maintain.
11. The scheme would also entail replacement of existing double glazed plastic windows in the front and rear elevations. The Council states that no record of consent exists for the installation of these windows, which, together with

insensitive replacements elsewhere in the terrace, harm the historic architectural integrity of the listed building. Based on surviving examples, the original windows were timber, multi-pane, single glazed sliding sashes. A window of this type survives between first and second floor level in the rear elevation.

12. The proposed replacement windows would be timber, and their format would generally match that of surviving original windows. They would however be double glazed, and in this crucial regard their design would not match the originals. Indeed, double glazing is an obviously modern product. That proposed would consist of slimline sealed units which are less easy but not impossible to detect from a distance than units of more standard width. Moreover, upon closer inspection, and from inside, their presence is usually obvious. This is typically highlighted by the depth of the sealed units and glazing bars, the spacer strip between the panes, and in visual contrast with single glazed windows where a direct comparison is available, as would be the case in this instance. The presence of double glazing within the replacement windows would therefore be both appreciable, and appreciably inconsistent with surviving historic windows.
13. For the above reasons, the improvement delivered by the proposed frame designs would not outweigh the harm caused to the historic architectural integrity of the listed building by the use of double glazing within them. More so, given that in this case the unauthorised existing windows do not form a legitimate starting point for purposes of comparison. Therefore, on balance, the proposed windows would neither preserve the listed building, nor better reveal its significance.
14. The scheme would additionally involve addition of a single storey to an existing closet wing, which the plans confirm would be roofed in lead. The addition would require displacement of the surviving historic window on the landing between first and second floor level, and enlargement of the window opening. Though the window would be reinstalled within the extension, its displacement, and related loss of context, would diminish its significance. Its insertion into a modern addition would further confuse and obscure the identity of the building. In each regard further harm would arise.
15. As set out above, the scheme would entail alterations that would diminish the significance of the listed building, and these would be at least partly appreciable from within the public realm. It thus follows that the scheme would also harm the contribution that the listed building makes to the significance of the Conservation Area.
16. The scheme would therefore both fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building, and fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As such it would conflict with the expectations of the Act, and paragraphs 193 and 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which set out the great weight to be attached to the conservation of designated heritage assets, and the need for clear and convincing justification for any harm.
17. With further reference to paragraph 196 of the Framework, I find that the scheme would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of both the listed building and to that of the Conservation Area. I attach great weight to the harm that would be caused to the significance of the listed building, and

considerable importance and weight to the harm that would be caused to the significance of the Conservation Area. In accordance with the Framework it is necessary to balance this harm against the public benefits advanced in favour of the scheme.

18. Insofar as replacement of the plastic windows has been advanced as a heritage benefit of the scheme, I have addressed this in my reasons above. In view of my findings, this consideration does not attract any weight.
19. The appellant states that energy efficiency would be improved through use of insulation. Double glazed windows would also be more energy efficient than single glazed windows. However, with sensitive specification, insulation could also be added to the building as it currently stands. The performance of single glazed windows could also be improved by measures such as secondary glazing. Whilst the broader environmental benefits of the scheme would be very limited, it is clear that the scheme does not represent the only or most appropriate way in which environmental improvements could be achieved. As such I attach negligible weight to the benefits.
20. An increase in internal accommodation would otherwise be a private benefit, and any broader economic benefits of undertaking the works would be negligible in scale. At best therefore the public benefits of the scheme attract negligible weight, which is insufficient to outweigh the harm that it would cause.
21. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the scheme would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, and that it would additionally fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It would thus fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, heritage policy set out within the Framework, and, insofar as it is relevant, Policy DM30 of the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, which states that extensions and alterations will be expected to respect the scale, form, materials, details and the overall design and character of the host building, and to retain and/or reinstate traditional or distinctive architectural features and fabric.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR