



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 May 2021

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/20/3252628

130 Boileau Road, Barnes London SW13 9BP

- 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 Mrs Rana Al-Atia against the decision of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 20/0183/FUL, dated 23 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is a hip to gable with rear dormer roof extension and installation of two rooflights to front roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have taken the description of the development from the Council's decision notice as this more accurately describes the elements which require planning consent.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the appeal property and the character and appearance of the locality, including the setting of the Castelnau Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal property appears to be an infill development which consists of a semi-detached dwelling that contains of 4 apartments. The building appears to date from the mid-late twentieth century and is a symmetrical composition with hipped roof form, brick construction with feature brick parapet wall to the front which breaks past the eaves, with a central chimney stack and lean-to porches to either side. The building lies outside, but on the border with the CA, which contains a collection of large classical villas set within well vegetated gardens where spacing and gaps between dwellings place an emphasis on the status and picturesque street scene. Whilst the appeal site has a much lower status than the historic buildings surrounding, the appeal building is experienced as part of the historic street scenes, particularly alongside the historic dwelling on the opposite side of Boileau Road and fronting Lonsdale Road. Whilst I appreciate that on the opposite side of the appeal site lies a modern block of apartments, the well landscaped front gardens and setbacks of the appeal site, have much more in common with the experience gained of the conservation area.

5. The proposed extension would change the hipped roof to a gabled roof which would give an asymmetrical appearance where one side of the building would be hipped and the appeal building would be gabled. The asymmetrical design would present as a distraction within the street scene which consists of classical villas where symmetry is a key element to their design and relationship to the street scene. The roof extension combined with the dormer window would remove much of the existing roof form, which is specifically discouraged within the House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (HESPD) which supports the Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan (LP) Policy LP1. The HESPD further describes the need to consider the symmetry with the adjoining semi-detached property and the roof scape between buildings.
6. I acknowledge comments within the Applicant's Statement of Case (SoC) that the extension is required to facilitate additional space for a growing family that are currently experiencing cramped living conditions and a lack of home office space. However, there may be other means of extending the dwelling which would be more in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. My attention is also drawn to a number of sites¹ within the surrounding area that also contain hip to gable roof extensions. These dwellings are part of a planned housing estate of semi-detached dwellings, with many of the roof extensions having been carried out historically under permitted development. This is a different scenario to the appeal site which directly abuts the CA and forms part of a street scene with historic buildings. In this particular street scene, hip to gable roof extensions are not a characteristic feature, and alterations undertaken within a nearby housing estate do not assist in providing adequate justification towards the harm caused to the character and appearance of the appeal building or the locality.
7. The elongation of the ridge, combined with the massing of the extension diverts from the strong character of the existing hipped roof form of the appeal building. Taken as a whole, the proposed alterations to the appeal dwelling would cause unacceptable harm to the architectural authenticity and integrity of the existing building and the character and appearance of the CA from development within its setting. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to the LP Policies LP1 (which seeks that development is compatible with local character including the relationship to existing townscape, development patterns, views, local grain and frontages as well as scale, height, massing, density, landscaping, proportions, form, materials and detailing), which is supported by the SPD.
8. I therefore disagree with the applicant's SoC that the proposal would not change the architectural composition or aesthetic character of the neighbourhood. Although serious, the harm to the CA in this case would be 'less than substantial,' within the meaning of the term in paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 requires that, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

¹ 2 Nowell Road; 22 Nowell Road; 30 Nowell Road; 36 Nowell Road; 46 Nowell Road; 54 Nowell Road; 60 Nowell Road; 47 Kilminster Road; 82 Boileau Road; 88 Boileau Road; 95 Boileau Road.

9. I note that the benefits of the scheme would deliver larger residential accommodation for the existing dwelling, as well as result in short term employment opportunities in the construction of the extension. However, these benefits may also be present in a more appropriately designed scheme.
10. That said, I therefore find that the public benefits would not outweigh the harm to the CA from development within its setting. The scheme therefore conflicts with the Framework, which directs, at paragraph 193, 'that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation...irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to their significance'.
11. In conclusion on this matter, I consider the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. It has not been shown that public benefits would outweigh this harm and so the proposal would conflict with the development plan.

Other Matters

12. There are comments from an interested party with regards to harm caused by the proposal to their living conditions as a result of noise and disturbance. Given that the application fails in terms of the harm caused to the character and appearance, it has not been necessary to investigate these concerns with regards to living conditions.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR