



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 April 2021

by Conor Rafferty LLB (Hons), AIEMA, Solicitor

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/21/3268469

82 & 84 St Stephens Road, Hounslow TW3 2BN

- 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 Harpreet Brar against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00992/82-84/P1, dated 3 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a front extension to existing outbuilding with conversion from flat to pitch roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - (i) the character and appearance of the host dwellings and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St Stephens Conservation Area; and
 - (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises two detached Victorian properties located in the St Stephens Conservation Area (CA). The special interest of the CA is derived from good quality late Victorian properties on spacious plots, and the site is noted as a positive contributor. The appeal properties share a sizeable back garden with an outbuilding along the rear boundary. Although this spans the width of the site, its flat roof and simple design ensures that it does not detract from the style and significance of the host dwellings.

5. Although the current outbuilding is of limited architectural merit within the CA, its design ensures that it integrates in the garden and has a subservient relationship to the host dwellings. Due to the scale and style of the proposal the proposal would be visually dominant, reducing the subservient nature of the outbuilding despite its single storey nature. In this sense the visual disruption to the host dwellings would be pronounced.
6. Moreover, the resulting increased scale and prominence of the outbuilding would be at odds with nearby outbuildings within the rear garden environment. Although the gardens to the host dwellings are generous, the proposal would result in a reduction in the open space between the rear of the dwellings and the outbuilding which would be at odds with the spacious qualities that the rear gardens contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The extended building would appear incongruous in the context of the rear garden environment of the locality.
7. Accordingly, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwellings and the contribution that they make to the character and appearance of the area would be eroded. It follows that the proposal would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and consequently harm to the CA would result.
8. The proposal would not be visible from the street and as such, this would equate to 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Nonetheless the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes it clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Paragraph 196 of the Framework specifies that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
9. I note that the appellant considers the existing roof to be in a poor state of repair, however this could be repaired, and a pitched roof is not therefore the only solution to this problem. Moreover, such a matter does not amount to a public benefit in favour of the proposal.
10. For all of these reasons I find that the proposal would have a significantly adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host dwellings and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Accordingly, it would fail to comply with Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015 - 2030 and the Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document December 2017 (SPD), which together seek to promote good design and preserve the character and appearance of the CA. The proposal would also conflict with the statutory test relating to conservation areas.

Living Conditions

11. The proposal would increase the built form running along the side boundaries with the rear gardens of Nos 80 and 86 St Stephens Road in both depth and height. However, due to its design and positioning at the bottom of the gardens, and existing boundary treatments, it would not significantly alter the outlook from the neighbouring rear gardens, to the degree that it would make these areas less pleasant to use.

12. With regards to the outlook from the rear windows of the neighbouring properties, the proposal would be visible when looking towards the appeal site. However, the main outlook from these windows is largely down the properties' own rear gardens, which would remain. As such the introduction of the proposal would not significantly alter the overall outlook from the rear windows of these properties to the degree that the rooms that the windows serve would be less pleasant to use.
13. For the reasons given above I find that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regard to outlook. As such, it would accord with Policies CC2, CC4 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015 - 2030 and the SPD, which together seek to ensure adequate living conditions for neighbouring residents.

Other Matters

14. The appellant contends that the proposal would amount to permitted development but for the fact that the property is in the CA. Regardless of whether that is the case, there is no legitimate fallback position in terms of any consent granted through The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in this instance. In such circumstances, I must consider the planning merits of the proposal and reference to what may be erected under a hypothetical scenario has not altered my recommendation in relation to the main issue above.
15. The appellant has stated that the extended area will be used as a veranda so that the occupants will be able to use this area for exercise. Nonetheless, this must be balanced with the adverse impacts identified. I am not persuaded that there are no alternatives to the proposal that could deliver similar benefits without conflict with the development plan.
16. The appellant has referred to development at other properties, but limited information has been provided. The proposal should be assessed on its own site-specific circumstances and reference to other extensions nearby does not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. Having had regard to all matters raised, I find that there are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rafferty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR