



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 June 2021

by S Dean MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/20/3262387

69 Clapham Common West Side, LONDON, SW4 9AU

- 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 John Casey against the decision of London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2020/3028, dated 1 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is install new double painted timber doors to the front elevation to match others in adjacent properties. Installation of new frameless glass balustrading behind the existing stone balustrading to the roof terrace, to comply with building regulations. Installation of new doors to replace the existing loft doors and install new glass guarding in front of doors to replace existing guarding, and matching replacement doors and window to the roof terrace. New doors to be installed to rear at ground floor level facing the garden. Installation of photovoltaic cells to flat roof of loft.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. It is clear from the submissions of both parties that the only element of the appeal proposal at issue between them is the installation of the new double painted timber doors at the front of the property. The other works listed have been granted planning permission separately and appear to be underway. My Decision therefore only considers those doors.
3. Whilst I have the power to issue a split decision on an appeal, this power is discretionary, and I am not obliged to use it. I do not consider that the parts of the proposal which are acceptable are clearly severable from those parts which are not. Nor do I consider that such a split decision would be clearly and easily defined with reference to the submitted drawings. As such I do not consider that a split decision would be appropriate in this case.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within a terrace in which the houses are arranged in attractively detailed, mirrored pairs with a strong symmetry. Along Clapham Common West Side there are a number of similar terraces fronting onto the Common and separated by perpendicular roads. Although the terraces and houses within them do exhibit slight differences in design, detail and degree of

- change over time, there is a persistent, broad consistency of form, character and appearance amongst them.
6. The site is also within the Clapham Common Conservation Area (the CA), the significance of which is defined in the Clapham Common Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy, 2007 (the CACA) as being in the wide open space and houses that front onto it. The site, as one of the three-storey terraces referred to in the CACA makes a positive contribution to this significance through its character and appearance which is consistent with that of its immediate neighbours and the wider area and provides an attractive built setting to, and contrast with, the open space of the Common.
 7. The terrace in which the appeal site lies does not have any examples of outer doors as proposed in this appeal. I acknowledge that there are outer doors elsewhere along the street, but these are in other terraces, which as parties highlight and as I saw on my site visit, are already different to the one in which the appeal site lies.
 8. The addition of the outer doors at the front of the property would in my view substantially alter the appearance of the site. The closing off of the porch, as well as the disruption in the symmetry between the appeal site and its matched-neighbour, and between that pair and others in the terrace would lead to a harmful erosion of the consistent rhythm, character and appearance of this terrace. I note that there are already minor differences, particularly in terms of the painted colours of front doors, but consider that the open appearance of the porch, and the contribution this makes to the overall character and appearance of the site and the terrace as a whole with its matched pairs of open porches, is not affected by such minor differences. I do not consider that the degree of set-back proposed, setting the doors behind the columns would mitigate this harm.
 9. I note the suggestion that the proposal would allow the retention of the original front door and that this would still be visible when the outer doors were open. However, given the uncertainty as to how often the outer doors would be open, thereby negating their use for safety and security I do not give this suggestion great weight. In any event, even if it were somehow possible to ensure that the outer doors were kept open, I consider that their presence and their effect on the character and appearance of the site and the terrace would still be harmful to the overall established symmetry, character and appearance of the site and the terrace. This harm would not be outweighed by the protection and retention of the original door behind them.
 10. I accept that the site and terrace are not unique. I also accept that there are other outer doors along the road, but they do not affect my conclusions on the effect of this proposal on this site, this terrace and the wider effects on the CA.
 11. In light of the great weight to be given to the conservation of the CA as a heritage asset, I consider that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to its significance. The appellant has suggested a number of benefits arising from the proposal. However, I do not consider that the restoration of features of interest on the rest of the property are of such a public benefit that they outweigh the harm which would be caused by the proposed doors. These other works are plainly not contingent on the doors subject to this appeal as the rest of those works are apparently already underway. In addition, for the

reasons set out above, I do not consider that protecting the original front door with the new outer doors is a public benefit.

12. The additional security which the proposed doors could provide is a private benefit. Whilst I acknowledge the desire of the appellant for increased security, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal is the only way to achieve this, and as such, I do not consider that this outweighs the harm I have found.
13. I therefore consider that there are no public benefits of the proposal which outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA as a designated asset that as a result, the proposal fails to preserve the character or appearance of the CA.
14. The proposal would therefore be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would conflict with policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document, March 2016. These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development is of high quality, contributes positively to the character of the area, conserves the historic environment and is well designed and sympathetic to the style of the surrounding area. The proposal would also conflict with the conserving and enhancing the historic environment aim set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that a decision be taken other than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

S Dean

INSPECTOR