
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2021

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A5270/D/21/3284716

23 Audley Road, LONDON, W5 3ES

- 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 Anant Sra against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing.
 - The application Ref 215029FUL, dated 28 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as the construction of a single-storey rear and side extension, a first-floor side extension, and a single-storey front porch extension; the conversion of the garage to a habitable room involving insertion of a window in lieu of the garage door; a roof extension to the main rear roof slope; removal of all existing chimney stacks; and the construction of a single-storey rear outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The proposed development is complex, and I consider the description on the decision notice to be more complete and accurate than that on the application form. For that reason, I have used the description from the decision notice as the basis for my description above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Hanger Hill (Haymills) Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. No 23 is a detached house situated on a long corner plot at the junction of Audley Road with The Ridings. It is a double-fronted house with a large two-storey front bay to the east of the recessed entrance door, and a smaller two-storey front bay with garage to the west of the door. The smaller bay has a hipped roof above, while the prominent larger bay has a gable front with half-timbered façade above the windows. The main roof is hipped although there is a small gable projection in brick to the eastern side, which includes twin chimneys and what appears to be an arched feature at ground-floor level. There is a small brick-built extension at the side which partially obscures the arch and which was apparently originally used as an air-raid shelter.

5. No 26 Audley Road, which is on the southern corner plot opposite the appeal property, is of an almost identical design, whilst Nos 25 and 28, on the other two corner plots are also of almost identical design, with the exception that the side projections have a sloped roof and half-timbered first-floor façade. All four of the corner plots at this junction are set well in from their boundaries with The Ridings. No 25 is the only one of the corner plots to have no chimney stacks on the elevation facing The Ridings.
6. From the above, and from the CA Character Appraisal, it would appear that the appeal property, along with the other corner properties, is a good example of a 'Mock Tudor 2' type of house. The Character Appraisal notes that this type of house is double fronted with a projecting gabled roof with deep soffits overhanging a wide tile-clad front bay. The type has a central recessed porch, with small "lozenge" shaped window to one side. A smaller bay projects forward beneath the secondary hipped roof. A mixture of rendering and half timbering is found to first floors. Corner houses of this type have an individual design of the flank elevations, including projecting bays, gables, hipped dormer roofs, twin brick chimneystacks, diamond pattern brickwork and half timbering.
7. As a result of the Character Appraisal process, the aspects of the area that are under the most threat have been identified in the CA Management Plan (MP). The threats include the removal of boundary walls, hedges or fences; unsuitable and out-of-scale extensions including dormer windows and garish front porches; and unsuitable window and door replacements or other features that affect the parts of houses fronting a highway. In addition, within the CA there are a number of corner properties with distinctive chimney and window details and, as noted in Section 5.6, side extensions to the corner properties will not normally be permitted.
8. Policy 7C of the Council's Development Management DPD (DPD) indicates that a development of heritage assets and their settings should be based on an analysis of their significance and the impact of proposals upon that significance; should conserve the significance of the asset in question; should protect and where appropriate restore original or historic fabric; and should enhance or better reveal the significance of assets. Moreover, development within conservation areas should retain and enhance characteristic features and detailing of the conservation area and retain elements identified as contributing positively to the conservation area. Policy 7.4 of the DPD indicates that development in Ealing's existing built areas should complement their street sequence, building pattern, scale, materials, and detailing.
9. The Council contends that the proposed development, by reason of its scale, siting, height, depth, massing, prominence, design and materials, would result in an overbearing and out of keeping development at odds with the style of the host dwelling and traditional setting of the CA; would result in the loss of distinctive architectural design details; and would enclose a prominent corner location, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the dwelling and the CA.
10. The appellant contends that, by virtue of the scale of the property and its plot, the proposed development would not appear out of scale, and that the extensions would remain subservient to the main house. Moreover, he notes the existence of other houses in the vicinity that have had similar alterations, and that the appeal proposal would not, therefore, appear out of character.

11. In this case, there are many elements to the proposal. With regard to the single-storey rear extension, this would be some 5 metres in depth and would extend across the full width of the house, including the 2.6 metre wide side extension. It would have a flat roof and two sets of bi-fold patio doors. On this basis, it would cut across the two rear bays and introduce alien design features to the rear of the house. The appellant notes the existence of a conservatory at No 21, close to the boundary with the appeal property. However, this is of a relatively characteristic glazed and hipped roof design, and appears to extend only a small amount across the rear elevation.
12. The MP indicates that single-storey rear extensions should generally not exceed 3.05 meters in depth or height, unless they are a sufficient distance from the adjoining properties. The design of the extension must be in keeping with the character of the original house, and door and window openings must relate to those of the original house in proportions and detailing. Flat roofed extensions will only be accepted when they are consistent with the house type. The proposed rear extension at No 23 would not comply with these requirements.
13. The proposed side extension would be largely two-storey and would involve the extension of the existing gable side projection by a further 2.6 metres up to the side boundary. It would have a two-storey depth of around 5.5 metres. On this basis, it would be a prominent feature and would appear as an incongruous side addition that would effectively unbalance the appearance of both the host property and also the four corner properties around junction of Audley Road and The Ridings, which currently retain an open and coherent character. In addition, it would result in the loss of the distinctive arched feature in the ground-floor side elevation of the house, which is mirrored in No 26 opposite.
14. With regard to the rear dormer, this would sit very high on the roof slope and would be prominent in the street scene. I acknowledge the existence of rear roof dormers on other properties in the vicinity, and I do not consider that a rear roof dormer, in itself, would necessarily be harmful to the character or appearance of the host property or its surroundings. However, in this case, by virtue of its proximity to The Ridings and its prominent position, coupled with the somewhat unsympathetic window design and patterns, I find that it would be harmful to the roofscape of No 23. Furthermore, it would add to the overall bulk of the proposed extensions which would cumulatively be harmful to the appearance of the house in its context.
15. In similar vein, there are a number of issues with regard to proposed windows in different elements of the building. In addition to the matters already referred to with regard to the windows in the proposed dormer and the large glazed elements of the patio doors in the proposed rear extension, the windows in the converted garage would appear out of character in the replacement wall within the front elevation of the house.
16. The proposals include alterations to the recessed front door and canopy, to extend the front access and insert new double doors. I note the existence of a similar door arrangement at the nearby No 24, but this is uncharacteristic of Mock Tudor 2 Type properties in the area, and should ideally not be repeated. Furthermore, the proposals would involve the removal of all of the chimneys at No 23 and, in particular, the distinctive chimneys in the side elevation. These are important original features of the property and, with the exception of the

nearby No 25, are replicated at the other corner properties around the road junction, and their loss would be a detrimental development in this location.

17. Finally, given the size of the rear garden at the appeal property, I do not consider that the proposed outbuilding, in itself, would be out of scale with the rest of the property, but its flat-roofed design would be out of character and unsympathetic to that of the main house, and this adds to my other concerns about the proposals as a whole. Moreover, it would appear that the outbuilding would be constructed relatively close to a major tree situated in the rear garden of the property. In the absence of sufficient further detail on this matter, its effect on that tree could potentially be harmful, to the detriment of the character of the area, which includes numerous trees and hedges as significant features.
18. The appellant has indicated that he would be prepared to accept conditions relating to window/door designs and replacement chimneys. Such conditions may well be possible, but they would not overcome the more significant concerns relating to the scale and general design issues raised by the large side and rear extensions, the dormer, the outbuilding, and the loss of a number of original features.

Conclusion

19. In conclusion, I find that that the significant cumulative scale of the extensions would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and to the wider CA as a whole, particularly in the light of the prominent corner position of the plot. The side extension would project to the boundary of the property to the detriment both of the appearance of the house and the open character of the area around the junction of Audley Road and The Ridings. The scale and design of the rear extension, along with the addition of the rear dormer and the outbuilding, would result in harm to the character of the existing house, as would the unsympathetic design of the proposed new front door area and garage conversion.
20. On this basis, the proposal would fail to comply with a number of management policies contained in the CA Management Plan, which is based upon the CA Character Appraisal, including a number of 'elements at risk' in Section 5.4 and 'design guidelines' in Section 5.6. It would, therefore, also conflict with Policies 7C and 7.4 of the DPD
21. Finally, in the light of the above, while the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to significance of the CA as a whole, there are no public benefits of the development to outweigh the harm identified, as required by section 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR