



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2022

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date 8th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/21/3280772

Flat 6, 118 Richmond Hill, Richmond TW10 6RJ

- 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 Guy Peters against the decision of London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Council.
 - The application Ref 21/1072/FUL, dated 17 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 02 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is 'Alterations to dormers and fenestration on both front and rear elevations'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development was amended following submission of the application; I have utilised the amended description.
3. The address of the appeal site is given as no.118 Richmond Hill. The property is also known as Ashburton House.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the host building, an undesignated heritage asset, and the character and appearance of the area; particularly whether the proposal would sustain and enhance the significance of the Richmond Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is the top floor flat within no.118 Richmond Hill (the host building). The host building is an attractive mid-terrace Regency or Victorian building. It is not listed but is recognised as a Building of Townscape Merit, an undesignated heritage asset, as are nos. 120 and 122 adjoining the property within the terrace. No.116 Richmond Hill, which also adjoins the host building, is Grade II listed. The site is located within the Richmond Hill Conservation Area (RHCA).
6. The RHCA Appraisal states that *"the Richmond Hill area is characterised by the exceptional quality of its 18th century architecture and is distinctive groups of fine later Regency and Victorian housing, historically overlooking the river landscape from the hillside above. These buildings form a varied and distinctive landmark skyline in views from the river. The townscape is unified by the*

general use of face brickwork in a limited palette of colours. The repetition of similar architectural features, fenestration and materials, and their scale and proportions, further draws the character of these buildings together.”.

7. The host building is a fine example of those buildings identified within the RHCA Appraisal as characteristic of the RHCA. The appeal site and the other properties within its terrace have the characteristic repetition of regular architectural features, particularly fenestration, which create uniform regularity and vertical emphasis. Further, the scale, detail and hierarchical proportions of those features create a high-quality environment and sense of grandeur, which contributes positively to the significance of the RHCA.
8. The appeal proposal seeks to replace the existing dormer windows to the front and rear of the host building and to alter the roof adjacent the chimney stack.
9. There are a wide variety of dormer types and styles within the RHCA and the street scene, however, the majority are of a scale and type which is proportionate to, and subservient to, the other windows in the property and which is reflective of the characteristic hierarchy of architectural features of such Regency and Victorian buildings.
10. The existing dormer windows within the host dwelling are not reflective of the otherwise high-quality and well-proportioned host building. Several of the existing dormer windows are uPVC and others are thin metal framed windows, which are in a poor state of repair. The dormers are also poorly proportioned; they are wider and larger than the windows in the floors below and are irregularly aligned. As such, the existing dormers detract from the character and appearance of the host building and RHCA.
11. The replacement windows would be constructed in more traditional timber materials and would seek to achieve a vertical emphasis by increasing the height of the dormers and through the use of narrow sections of frame. The increased width of the middle dormer on the front elevation would also create a greater sense of regularity and alignment.
12. However, that same increase in width would undermine the design attempt at vertical emphasis and would also result in an increase in depth and overall scale of the dormers. This would increase their prominence within the Richmond Hill street scene and would exacerbate the already uncharacteristic disproportion of the dormers with the rest of the fenestration within the host building. The dormers would dominate the host building and would therefore fail to respect the hierarchy of features which create the characteristic appearance of regularity, grandeur and high-quality design within the RHCA.
13. As such, the appeal proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the RHCA and would also fail to integrate well with the host building, the adjacent buildings and character and appearance of the wider area.
14. Whilst the traditional materials and style of window would be an improvement to the existing windows, the proposed changes to the dormers themselves would create greater harm. The existing windows are in a poor state of repair and a positive outcome in respect of window frame materials and style could be achieved through maintenance, without increasing the scale of the dormers. Similarly, the alteration to the roof may help prevent water ingress into the

building, thereby sustaining the future of the undesignated heritage asset, however, such an improvement could also be achieved through maintenance and without the harmful impact of the addition of larger dormers. As such, the public benefit arising from the proposal in this respect is limited and does not outweigh the harm arising from the otherwise poor and incongruous design.

15. The proposal would also improve the internal accommodation of Flat 6, creating a small private benefit for the occupants. Whilst the marginally extended and better maintained internal accommodation might provide for more attractive living accommodation, it does not follow that the future sustainability of the host building is reliant on, or better secured by, the scheme in a manner which amounts to a public benefit.
16. For these reasons, the appeal proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the RHCA, the setting of other buildings, and the host building which is an undesignated heritage asset. That harm is not outweighed by the public benefits arising from the scheme. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the Local Plan, adopted in 2018, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies seek, amongst other things, development of a high-quality design which integrates with local character and which takes opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets.

Other considerations

17. An extant planning permission, Council Ref.21/2785/FUL, exists for similar rear dormer alterations at the appeal site. Since planning permission has been granted for that scheme and there is a reasonable likelihood the development would take place as permitted, the permitted scheme constitutes a realistic 'fallback' position and a material consideration. The permitted scheme would have a very similar impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area, in respect of the rear elevation, as the appeal scheme. As such, I attribute substantial weight to this consideration.
18. However, the permitted scheme would not result in the same harm as I have identified above in respect of the alternations to the dormers in the front elevation, which are the most prominent elements of the appeal scheme in the RHCA. As such, this consideration does not indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusions

19. For the reasons stated above, I find that the appeal proposal is contrary to the relevant policies of the Development Plan and would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the RHCA. That harm would not be outweighed by the limited public benefits arising from the proposed development. The appeal is accordingly dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR