
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 February 2022

by S. Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 9th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5630/D/22/3290901

64, Richmond Park Road, Kingston Upon Thames, KT2 6AJ

- 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 Asta Lynford against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 21/02945/HOU, dated 10 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is alterations to the roof including construction of L-shaped roof extension, addition of first floor front bay window and also French doors with side panels to the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 64, Richmond Park Road is an extended detached two-storey house which, viewed from the road, is a modest property characterised by a shallow pitched pyramid roof, traditionally proportioned fenestration including a bay window at ground floor level, and a tall chimney. To the rear, the property has been extended by means of a substantial two storey addition with a shallow pitched roof and a single storey lean-to.
4. The property lies in a well-established residential area with development set out in a generally linear form, on clearly defined building lines. There is a variety of types of property including detached, semi-detached and terraced housing generally built, it appears, around a similar time. Some properties are grouped with others of a similar style and design detail, which, where this occurs, provides a rhythm to the street scene.
5. No 64 is one of three detached houses including Nos 66 and 68 that, from the front, appear to have a similar appearance and form, albeit that some of the fenestration has been altered over time. The style of these three properties contrasts with those adjacent and opposite which are higher and have prominent gables facing the highway. As a group, the three properties make a positive contribution to the street scene.

6. The proposal would not increase the footprint of the building. Instead, the roof of the dwelling would be raised in height and altered so that from the front it would appear as a pitched roof spanning the full width of the building, concealing a flat roof behind. The existing rear extension would also be increased in height and altered to a pitched roof concealing a flat roofed element, slightly lower in height than that at the front. In addition, the proposal would include the installation of 2 Juliet balconies to the rear and 3 rooflights to the front, provision of a first-floor bay window to the front and the removal of the chimney.
7. The proposed roof alterations would not reflect the form of the existing building, and indeed would be so comprehensive that the existing roof form would no longer be apparent. Moreover, the increase in the height and width of the front roof slope would alter the proportions and massing of the building so that it would appear bulky and top heavy, particularly in the context of Nos 66 and 68. The resulting building would cease to reflect the modest character or appearance of the building or group of three when viewed from the front.
8. I recognise that the roof form and frontage of some properties along Richmond Park Road have undergone alteration since the houses were originally built, although the original form and detailing of a large proportion appear to have been retained. The height of the neighbouring dwelling No 62 has been increased although its form still reflects both the original building and that of the neighbouring properties Nos 60 and 58. Whilst the proposed roof of No 64 would be no higher than No 62, its form would not reflect that of either of the properties adjacent to it.
9. In addition to the alterations to the roof, the increase in the height of the bay window from a single storey to a double height bay would create a dominant feature on the front of the property. Whilst I acknowledge that double height bays are a feature on many Victorian properties there are a limited number on Richmond Park Road, in contrast to ground floor bay windows which are a common and distinctive local feature. The incongruity of the two-storey bay in this location would be exacerbated by the steeply pitched pyramid style of roof which would not reflect the predominant form of the bay windows locally. Whilst the bay window may allow more light into the first-floor room, it would add to the incongruous appearance of the development as a whole.
10. The removal of the chimney is a limited element of the proposal and I understand that there may be practical reasons for its demolition. However, whilst I acknowledge that the chimney is disused, there is no evidence before me that it is causing damp within the house or that there are no alternative means of rectifying the issue. It seems to me that the unwarranted removal of prominent, characterful original design elements of a building, whether or not in a Conservation Area, can cause incremental harm to the character and appearance of an area.
11. My attention has been drawn to other examples of development within the street which I have taken into account. It appears that some of those examples were constructed under permitted development rights and did not require planning permission. They are not therefore directly comparable to the case before me. Moreover, some are not necessarily good examples of development to follow and have a negative impact on the street scene. Whilst I acknowledge that there is a variety of styles of building locally, I am not

- persuaded that this justifies the harmful alteration of a positive element of the street scene.
12. No 107 is a detached dwelling with a side gabled roof set between two detached houses which have shallow pitched pyramid roofs similar to the appeal site. These three properties lack the rhythm and harmonious appearance of Nos 64-68 as a group. However, their fenestration pattern also differs, and without evidence to the contrary I cannot be sure that the three properties were originally a matching group. Moreover, I am not persuaded that this property justifies the proposal before me.
 13. At my visit I noted that a large proportion of the properties in the immediate vicinity of the site had undergone some form of roof extension at the rear. In that context the proposal would be less significant in terms of its visual effect when viewed from the rear. I also note that the Council raised no specific objections to the rear part of the proposal in itself.
 14. Nevertheless, as a result of its height, form, bulk and appearance neither the proposed roof form, nor the first-floor bay window would reflect the character of the property but rather would detract from it. Those alterations, in addition to the loss of the chimney would thereby have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the street scene for the reasons set out above.
 15. As such the proposal would fail to comply with Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 which requires a design led approach to determining the most appropriate form of development that responds to the site's context and capacity for growth, and responds to local distinctiveness through its appearance and shape having regard to existing street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions. In addition, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS8 and DM10 of the Council's Core Strategy 2012 which seek in various ways to ensure that new development recognises distinctive local features and character and ensure that the distinctiveness of a street, including prevailing development typology, form, massing, typical details and key features, should be respected, maintained or enhanced.
 16. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. I recognise that the proposal would provide enhanced family accommodation. This is a private benefit of the proposal which I have taken into account. However, such benefit does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the property or wider street scene. As such the matter does not indicate that permission should be granted contrary to the development plan.
 17. Accordingly, taking into account all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR