



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2022

by F Wilkinson BSc (Hons), MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/22/3292781

Flat Second and Third Floors, 21A Southolm Street, London SW11 5EZ

- 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 Michael Nolan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2021/3740, dated 6 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is to add a second storey rear extension on the flat roof and reconstruct the hipped roof to a gable end including an extension to the existing rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, including the Park Town Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a duplex flat on the second and third floors of a three storey end terrace building with a four storey back addition and a dormer roof extension. The proposed development would comprise the erection of a hip to gable roof extension, a rear dormer roof extension and a two storey rear extension.
4. Southolm Street is a cul de sac comprising similarly designed three storey properties. Although it is beside a railway bridge and there is a small number of commercial premises within the bridge arches, the area retains a generally residential character.
5. The property lies within the Park Town Conservation Area (the Conservation Area). From the evidence before me and my site visit observations, the significance of the Conservation Area is derived, in part, from its architectural and historic interest associated with the development of the area including the spatial arrangement of the buildings with each other and the surrounding spaces, and the evidence it provides of the architectural style and building techniques of the time.

6. Based on the information in the Conservation Area Appraisal¹ and my own site visit observations, the early phase of the Conservation Area's development includes a number of attractive three storey terraces including those on Southolm Street. There are some variations in design between the properties in the terraces on Southolm Street, but the retention of a stock brick on the majority of the properties, regular fenestration with stucco surrounds, painted door cases with slightly inset doors, deep overhanging eaves with supporting brackets, and hipped roofs with regularly spaced chimneys gives the area around the appeal property a homogeneous appearance and a strong sense of symmetry.
7. The property shares many of these characteristics. Although not as prominent as other properties on Southolm Street due to its positioning close to the railway bridge, it nevertheless makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. This is not diminished by the property's proximity to the railway, with the Conservation Area Appraisal noting that the railway arches provide a dramatic backdrop to a number of properties including on Southolm Street.
8. The Conservation Area Appraisal states that roof extensions should be designed to complement the character of the house. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Housing, 2016, (the SPD) is generally resistant to hip to gable roof extensions and notes that changing a hipped roof to a gabled roof on a corner house could be disruptive to a consistent and harmonious roofscape where the hipped roof form is a common feature.
9. Although occupying a corner plot at the end of a terrace, visibility of the roof within the street scene is relatively limited from public vantage points, mainly due to its location relative to the railway bridge. Views of the proposed changes to the roof would be possible from certain locations on Southolm Street, in particular from the rear and near to the railway bridge arch to the front. The property, including its roof, would be visible for train passengers. I acknowledge that Southolm Street is a cul de sac and so there would be relatively limited footfall or vehicles. Nevertheless, the character of the Conservation Area derives from the buildings, layout, and surrounding spaces as a whole, regardless of whether particular elements are open to public view. Its significance does not therefore rely only on the elements that can be readily seen.
10. The proposed hip to gable extension to the roof and the proposed rear dormer extension would substantially change the roof shape of the property. The proposed hip to gable extension would be contrary to the prevailing hipped roof form at the end of the terraces on Southolm Street, including the one in which the property sits. It would give an unbalanced appearance to the terrace by increasing the bulk of the roof structure of the host property.
11. The existing rear dormer sits higher than the ridge of the roof. It is visible in views towards the front of the property from certain vantage points along Southolm Street. However, it is not significantly obtrusive in such views due to its positioning relative to the chimney. In contrast, the proposal would extend the dormer to the full width of what would be an extended roof ridge length. This would substantially increase the extent of the raised ridgeline, which would increase the visual prominence of the rear dormer and would further

¹ Park Town Estate Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy, 2010

unbalance the relatively cohesive appearance of the terrace. The use of slate tiles on the dormer rather than the existing concrete tiles would not adequately mitigate this.

12. The altered shape of the roof and increased bulk that would result from the hip to gable and dormer extensions would result in an unsympathetic and dominant addition to the host property. Notwithstanding that the terrace comprises only three properties, the proposal would change the appearance of the host property and its roof form such that it would unbalance the symmetrical appearance of the terrace.
13. The terrace opposite the property has a gable end at no.14. The submitted information has not identified any conclusive evidence about its planning history. Irrespective of any possible lack of enforcement action, hipped roofs rather than gable ends form an important part of the character and appearance of the street scene. The presence of a gable end in the terrace opposite the property would not therefore provide sufficient justification for the proposed development.
14. The deep eaves overhang is a feature that positively contributes to the character and appearance of the terraces on Southolm Street. The existing rear extension already extends above the original eaves and has resulted in the loss of part of this characteristic feature. However, the proposed rear extension would result in its complete removal from the rear elevation. Rather than providing a more coherent rear elevation therefore, the proposed rear extension would be an unsympathetic addition that would harm the character and appearance of the host property.
15. There are a number of rear extensions to properties in the vicinity which are more visible from the public domain than that proposed, including those on the terrace in which the property sits. However, these extensions mainly sit below the eaves or do not extend across the whole width of the host property. Consequently, it is still possible to discern the original eaves including the characteristic deep overhang, and so they do not have the same harmful effect on the host properties as the proposed rear extension would.
16. Consequently, the proposed development would represent an incongruous addition that would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. The scale, design and positioning of the proposed development, and the harm that it would cause to the property and the surrounding area, is such that it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and would cause harm to its significance.
17. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), I assess the harm as less than substantial. Even so, paragraph 199 of the Framework directs me to give 'great weight' to the conservation of such assets; less than substantial harm does not equate to a less than substantial planning consideration. Accordingly, paragraph 200 of the Framework sets out how any harm should require 'clear and convincing justification'. Paragraph 202 of the Framework further advises that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
18. The proposed development would provide an extended living space for residents of the property. While appreciating the appellant's desire to create

additional space, this would not amount to a public benefit. The proposal would include the replacement of the concrete roof tiles with slate like tiles which would be a more positive response to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There would be some employment benefits during construction. These may be considered positive public benefits, however the weight that I can ascribe them in terms of the proposed development would be limited. They would not represent 'clear and convincing justification' for harm to or loss of significance of the designated heritage asset, as required by paragraph 200 of the Framework.

19. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, and less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area.
20. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policies DMS1 and DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document, adopted 2016 (the DMPD) which, amongst other matters, require development to contribute positively to local spatial character, and that extensions and alterations do not harm the host building or street scene, as well as the advice in the SPD which has been summarised above. The proposed development would also conflict with the requirements of Policy DMS2 of the DMPD regarding proposals affecting heritage assets and would fail to satisfy the requirements of section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conclusion

21. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

F Wilkinson

INSPECTOR