

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2022

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 6th September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3300149
21 Bedford Road, Twickenham, TW2 5EW

- 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 Rafai Nieckarz against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 22/0029/HOT, dated 5 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is a roof extension with pitched front roof slope, flat main roof with mansard and dormer at rear.
-

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 property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property forms part of a terrace of predominantly residential properties occupying the northern frontage of Bedford Road. The southern frontage, apart from some garages and outbuildings, is undeveloped. The three properties at the eastern end of the terrace display shallow pitched roofs, but the remainder of the terrace is comprised of flat roofs with parapets of varying but generally shallow depths. The larger buildings¹ at either end of the terrace, which effectively act as bookends, are also flat roofed.
4. Whilst the appellant suggests otherwise, to my mind, the terrace, taken as a whole, presents an attractive, if rather idiosyncratic picture, in a locality where the streets are generally lined with pitched roofed dwellings. Overall, the terrace displays a rhythmic repetition of fenestration and other openings, albeit some examples of irregular replacements are evident, and most of the properties are attractively painted in a range of largely pastel colours. The roofline plays a significant role in defining the unity of this overall pleasant looking composition.

¹ The Rifleman public house & No 22 Bedford Road, occupied by an electrical contractor

5. The appellant stresses the architect's efforts to render the new roof structure as attractive and as unnoticeable as possible in the context of the guidance provided in the Council's SPD². In this respect the raked slope at the front is intended to make the structure unobtrusive from the street. The sectional drawing produced shows that the proposed structure would not be visible from the nearside footway, and I saw that would be the case.
6. However, it would be plainly visible from the footway on the opposite side of the road, at the junction of Bedford Road with Fifth Cross Road, and the side elevation of the structure would be prominent when approaching the site from the east. It would also be strikingly visible from outside the school in Fifth Cross Road, in the wide gap to the rear of the electrical contractor's business at 22 Bedford Road. From this point, at the rear, the bulkiness of the structure would be plainly apparent, projecting obtrusively, well above Nos 20 & 22's rooflines.
7. To my mind, the proposal would appear harmfully incongruous, both in respect of its effect on the host property and the terrace as a whole, notwithstanding the roof additions at the other end of the street. Moreover, a successful appeal could encourage others to follow suit with similar proposals, which the Council would find difficulty in resisting. The possible outcome therefore would be an undesirable pockmarking of projecting roofs along the street. The picture presented by the terrace, in such circumstances, would be far less pleasant than is the case now.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings. Accordingly, I find the proposals to be in clear conflict with those provisions of LP³ policy LP1 requiring the design of development to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the site, and to relate well to its existing context.

Other matters

9. I have noted the appellant's account of the planning history of the site and the outcome of pre-application consultations with the Council. Also noted is the appellant's point that the appeal property is not a heritage asset, designated or non-designated, and is not located within a Conservation Area. However, the application of LP policy LP1 is not restricted to properties so designated.
10. I have considered the appellant's references to the London Plan and development plan policies not mentioned in the officer report, and it is acknowledged that the proposal is compliant with aspects of some development plan policies. But this must be balanced against the proposal's performance in respect of other policy criteria, which I have done.
11. I have also seen the references to national policy and taken them into account. To my mind, however, the scheme represents a clear example of poor design. The Government attaches considerable importance to design, and the Framework⁴ advises that *'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies'*. I shall follow that guidance here.

² House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2015

³ Richmond Local Plan 2018

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework 2021 paragraph 134.

12. The appellant refers to the government's easing of restrictions on what people can do with their homes without the need for planning permission. However, there is no doubt that planning permission is required in this case, and the appellant does not suggest otherwise.
13. I note the appellant's views regarding his perception of the Council's 'performance', but it does not fall to me to consider or comment on such matters.
14. All other matters in the representations have been considered and taken into account but none outweighs those considerations which led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR