



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/22/3306417

68 Park Drive, Acton, Hounslow, London W3 8NA

- 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 Ms Soghra Naderi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00854/68/P2, dated 3 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'retention of front porch'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The porch is already in place. I have therefore dealt with this appeal on the basis of the retention of the existing development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Gunnersbury Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in respect of development affecting conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance. The National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') sets out that harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, should require clear and convincing justification.
5. Policy HC1 of the London Plan 2021 ('LP') requires proposals affecting heritage assets to conserve their significance, and is consistent with the Framework's approach.
6. This residential part of the Gunnersbury Park Conservation Area ('GPCA') broadly comprises terraced houses, which are set back from the tree-lined roads, behind small front gardens. The dwellings share many characteristics, such as dominant square bay features, and they display a common palette of facing materials - primarily render, timber, masonry and tiles.

7. The front doors of the houses in Park Drive are typically set back behind the bay windows, with a simple flat-roofed canopy above, as was the case at No 68, or are beneath a pent roof and behind a porch. However, even where there are porches, these tend to be substantially glazed, thus allowing the buildings' articulated form and layout to be 'read'. These design features, together with the setting and pattern of the terraces, all contribute to the significance of the GPCA, and provide a pleasing sense of rhythm and cohesion in the streetscene.
8. The porch at 68 Park Drive has a flat roof, with white UPVC walls, door, and window frames. Whilst that finish matches the property's existing windows, it gives the development a rather crude appearance, which is at odds with the materials and architectural detailing prevalent in these terraces. Contrary to the appeal statement, the porch also projects slightly forward of the host's bay. As a result of that, in combination with its flat-roofed form, and its largely solid, non-translucent front face, it also disrupts the prevailing style and pattern of development.
9. The scheme therefore fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the GPCA, and it thus conflicts with LP Policy HC1.
10. It also conflicts with the more general requirements of Policies CC1, CC2 and SC7 in the Hounslow Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (2015). These set out the need for good design, which conserves or enhances features which contribute to an area's character, and for extensions to complement the original building and to maintain the character of the streetscene, having regard to matters such as appearance and materials.
11. The scheme also conflicts with the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2017 which sets out that porches must not alter the overall appearance of the house; and it fails to comply with the Framework's requirement for good design, which is visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
12. However, as LP Policies D1 and D4 largely provide design guidance to boroughs, and a strategic basis for them to plan to meet their growth requirements, they are of limited relevance.
13. The harm to this designated heritage asset is a matter to which I attribute great weight. However, as that harm is less than substantial, in accordance with Framework paragraph 202 I am required to weigh it against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. The proposal provides the occupants with additional space and improved living conditions. However, the harm that the scheme causes to this designated heritage asset is not outweighed by its very modest public benefits. In the absence of clear and convincing justification for that harm, I conclude that as well as conflicting with the development plan, the scheme conflicts with the Framework. Consequently, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR