The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/22/3304722
42 St Christophers Close, Isleworth TW7 4NP

- 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 R Gabbi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
- The application Ref 01353/42/P1, dated 1 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2022.
- The development proposed is the erection of boundary treatment (brick wall with metal railings and hedge) to boundary adjoining Thornbury Road and relocation of existing timber fence.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of boundary treatment (brick wall with metal railings and hedge) to boundary adjoining Thornbury Road and relocation of existing timber fence at 42 St Christophers Close, Isleworth TW7 4NP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 01353/42/P1, dated 1 February 2022, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey house that occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of St Christophers Close and Thornbury Road within the Spring Grove Conservation Area (CA), which is predominantly residential in character. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) describes the special interest of the CA as an area originally planned as a grand Victorian suburb with some of the original estate planning 'in much of its splendour' still legible. The CAA does not identify the site as a focal point, nor is it defined as a positive contributor to the CA. It does, however, show the site to form part of a view along Thornbury Road, in both directions.

4. The proposal is to erect a low-level brick wall with black painted railings along part of the highway frontage of the site to Thornbury Road. The existing timber fence to the side of the main house would also be relocated. Together, these changes would partly enclose and subdivide the open green space around the front and side of No 42.

5. The proposed arrangement would differ to most other properties along the same side of St Christophers Close to the site that do not have boundary walls, railings or fences to enclose their front gardens. It would, however, be in keeping with the boundary treatments of several properties that address Thornbury Road in the vicinity of the site. Specifically, the highway frontages of properties on the west side of this highway include boundary walls, fences and hedgerows. In that context, the proposal would not be an uncharacteristic addition. Furthermore, an open frontage to the front garden of No 42 would be retained with the repositioned fence set back from the main front wall of the appeal dwelling. Consequently, the spacious feel at the entrance to and along the same side of St Christophers Close as the site would be maintained.

6. In views from Thornbury Road, the proposed wall, railings and hedgerow are not of a length or height to draw the eye. The use of materials to match those of the existing pier and wall to which the new wall would attach would also ensure that it blends into the street scene. Consequently, the view along Thornbury Road to which the CAA refers would not significantly change if the proposal were to come forward. For all these reasons, the proposed boundary treatment would reflect the character of the local area in accordance with the guidance within the Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (REG).

7. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area. The character and appearance of the CA would be preserved. As such, there is no conflict with Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 or SC7 of the Council's Local Plan 2015-2030 or the guidance within the REG. These policies and guidance broadly aim to ensure that development maintains the character of the local area and conserves and enhances heritage assets such as conservation areas.

8. It would also comply with the National Planning Policy Framework with regard to achieving well-designed places and in conserving and enhancing heritage assets. Additionally, there would be no conflict with the statutory duty. This duty requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, which I have done.

9. Interested parties raise concern that the proposal, if permitted, would set an undesirable precedent for similar forms of development elsewhere. However, it is a central planning principle that each case should be assessed on its own merits. Similarly, if an application were to be made for a different form of development on the site such as a material change of use of the land, then it too would be considered in the light of the circumstances at that time.

10. Although the new boundary treatment would partly enclose the green space at the front and side of No 42, its value as a visual amenity within the local area would not be significantly diminished for the reasons given. As the proposal would not encroach onto the adjacent footway, which is a reasonable width as it passes the site nor obstruct visibility for those using it, I doubt that people would need to move into the road to pass each other even if there is a queue waiting at the bus stop.

Conditions

11. In addition to the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to impose a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with

the approved plans for certainty. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, a condition is imposed to require that the external materials match those of the existing wall to which it would attach, as proposed. The wording of this condition differs to that suggested by the Council to make clear that the requirement relates to the wall rather than an extension.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Refs 2022/42/SCCI/101/A, 2022/42/SCCI/102/A1, 2022/42/SCCI/104/B1, 2022/42/SCCI/103/B and the Location Plan that shows the site edged red.
3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the wall hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing wall to which it attaches.