



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2022

by D Barlow BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/W/22/3300579

30A Merton High Street, Colliers Wood, London, SW19 1DN

- 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 Tim Mir (Drakesfield) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 22/P0031 dated 4 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the Provision of additional floor to provide a one bedroom flat, refurbishment of existing first floor flat for alternative access arrangement. Changes to ground floor elevations to provide access of Merton High Street and sealing of existing side entrance to first floor flat.
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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 area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located in a prominent corner position on the end of a two storey Victorian terrace of shops with residential accommodation above. It is situated within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area. The conservation area is extensive and contains different character areas. The appeal property is in Sub Area 2 (Colliers Wood) which derives its significance from the industrial heritage. No's 22-30 Merton High Street are mentioned specifically for their contribution to the conservation area in terms of the scale and proportions in relation to the townscape.
4. The host property has a roof line which is currently lower than the adjacent properties but has a similar roof pitch. The proposal would increase the pitch and with the incorporation of the mansard roof and front and side dormer windows, would significantly detract from the current street-scene, when viewed from the opposite side of Merton Road. There are no other mansard roofs or dormer windows in the terrace, and the proposal would unbalance the visual appearance and lead to a top-heavy feel, introducing a clear three storey property within this otherwise visual 2 storey terrace of properties.

5. The Appellant points out that there are similar mansard roof and dormer windows which have been approved locally, but they are principally where a number of roofs of that type already exist and thus do not appear incongruous, or the architectural style and design is completely different, such as at 18 Merton High Street, which in any event does not have a mansard roof.
6. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. The character or appearance of the Conservation Area would not be preserved or enhanced contrary to the statutory test contained within Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a matter to which I give considerable importance and weight. There would also be conflict with The London Plan (The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (March 2021)) Policy D3 which requires that development has regard to existing building types, forms and proportions, Merton's Sites and Policies Plan and Policies Maps (adopted July 2014) Policies DM D2 and DM D4 which seek to ensure proposals relate positively and appropriately to surrounding buildings and also conserve or enhance the significance of a heritage and Policy CS14 of the Local Development Framework Core Planning Strategy (Adopted July 2011) which requires development to conserve and enhance Merton's heritage assets.
7. The harm that would result to the Wandle Valley Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset would be less than substantial for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework); a matter to which I give great weight. The public benefits of the proposal including the provision of a unit of residential accommodation in an accessible location are recognised, but given the quantum of development proposed, these benefits do not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the significance of the conservation area. Therefore, the proposal also conflicts with the conserving and enhancing the historic environment aims of the Framework.

Other Matters

8. Representations have been made regarding the potential closure of the family business if the proposal went ahead, however this matter is not substantiated and I have not taken it into account in making my decision.
9. The proposal would make a contribution to housing provision within the Borough which would support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Furthermore, the new flat would be located in an accessible and sustainable location. However the scale of development proposed limits the weight that I can give to these matters. They do not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other considerations, the proposal conflicts with the Development Plan policies taken as a whole. There are no considerations, including the Framework, which indicate a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan. The appeal is dismissed.

D Barlow

INSPECTOR