



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2022

by N Praine BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/22/3295286

239 Petersham Road, Petersham TW10 7DA

- 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 Tudor Lodge Dental Practice against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 21/2237/FUL, dated 18 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as alterations to the existing building to provide one additional surgery and associated facilities along with an extended canopy over the entrance.
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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 existing building and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a dental practice which sits in a prominent location at the junction between Sandy Lane and Petersham Road (A307). The existing building is a building of townscape merit (BTM), and the appeal site is adjacent to the Petersham Conservation Area (PCA). Near to the appeal site there is a cluster of buildings also designated as both BTMs and grade listed buildings.
4. The existing building sits on an island which is predominantly laid to grass and this gives it a sense of spaciousness. Its modest proportions and symmetrical appearance, achieved through its central reception entrance, give this building a pleasing appearance which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the street scene.
5. The appeal site is also located outside but adjacent to the boundary of the PCA. The PCA's significance is derived from the largely unspoilt condition and range of historic buildings within Petersham along with the green spaces that surround the village. In this context the appeal site creates a sympathetic border with the PCA.
6. Despite its setback and lower roof, the proposed side extension would considerably close the gap to the side boundary. The loss of this open space would reduce the positive sense of spaciousness around the existing building. A bay window would also be lost, and the side extension would unsympathetically

confuse the symmetry of the prominent frontage either side of the reception entrance facing the A307.

7. The canopy extension to the front would be open in appearance and reflects the roof design of the existing dwelling. Additionally, conditions could be imposed to ensure sensitive materials would be used including brickwork panels. However, the canopy's considerable length would overwhelm the modest proportions of the host building particularly when read jointly with the proposed side extension.
8. For these reasons the proposed development would unacceptably erode the appeal site's important architectural value as a BTM and its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Given the immediacy of the PCA to the appeal site, it would also harmfully erode the setting from which its special features would be appreciated, both from within and outside of the PCA.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that heritage assets are irreplaceable and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and that any harm requires clear and convincing justification. The Framework also requires me to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the scheme.
10. I acknowledge that the proposal would improve NHS dental capacity at a time where waiting lists exist, and the decontamination facility proposed is required under Best Practice. I appreciate adequate dentistry provision is very important to the local community and health and wellbeing should be encouraged in the right places. Cycle parking would be provided, and the site is in a residential area. This development proposal would also deliver additional, albeit modest, employment opportunities and would modernise the building including access around it.
11. However, any additional provision must be clearly identified and substantiated. In this case, it has not been robustly shown that additional surgery space is required because of increases in qualifying patient numbers. While I accept the impacts of the pandemic have caused backlogs and increased waiting lists, the evidence before me does not clearly show waiting lists caused by the pandemic will remain as a significant and persistent long-term issue.
12. Even if the requirement for a larger surgery was robustly proven, there is no clear substantive evidence showing how the search was conducted for alternative premises or what considerations were given to the outcome of this exercise to rule out any available alternative premises in the locality.
13. While it is apparent the current practice is well regarded by its patients, the appeal building as a BTM is a heritage asset of quality which should be preserved. I am also required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the PCA. I attribute considerable importance and weight to the harm I have identified above. Accordingly, taking all the above into account, the benefits put forward would not outweigh the notable harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the existing building and

surrounding area. Accordingly, there would be conflict with the relevant provisions of Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan 2018, Policy C2 of the Ham and Petersham Neighbourhood Plan 2019, the Petersham Conservation Area Study and Statement, and the Framework all of which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

15. The appellant has also expressed concerns regarding the lack of communication from the Council during the application process. Whilst this must have caused the appellant some frustration, this does not materially affect my consideration of the planning merits of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

16. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Praine

INSPECTOR