



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2023

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/22/3307535

Flats 3 and 4 380B Richmond Road, Twickenham TW1 2DX

- 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 Ghulam Dastgir against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 21/3070/FUL, dated 30 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is removal of chimney to rear, alterations to roof comprising raising ridge height, addition of rooflights and skylights and installation of glass balustrades to rear third floor level to facilitate creation of balcony.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development stated on the Council's decision notice and appeal form is more accurate and succinct than that set out on the application form. As it is used by both main parties, I have used it in the banner heading above, and I am satisfied that no injustice would be caused by basing my assessment on this description.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the Richmond Road (East Twickenham) Conservation Area; and (ii) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site includes an end of terrace building at the junction of Morley Road with Richmond Road. It is located within the Richmond Road (East Twickenham) Conservation Area ('the CA') which the Conservation Area Statement notes is characterised architecturally by consistent purpose-built Edwardian shopping parades, providing a sense of urbanity and cohesiveness to the area. Despite some extensions and alterations, I saw that the roofs across the terraces typically retain a symmetrical appearance from the street scene with seemingly fairly consistent mansard forms and a regular arrangement of dormers, albeit with a higher centrepiece to the adjacent terrace at 382-400 Richmond Road. Together with the similar architectural detailing and fenestration to the buildings, this provides for a distinctive rhythm

and sense of uniformity to the terraces. As part of a terrace which reflects these qualities, I find that the appeal building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA, and thus its significance.

5. The proposed development would be of comparable height to roof extensions to the adjoining building at 378 Richmond Road and 374-376 Richmond Road beyond. However, these are mid-terrace buildings which are set in from Morley Road, and the set back of the highest part of the roofs from Richmond Road reduces their visual impact so that they are relatively inconspicuous, particularly in the Richmond Road street scene. In contrast, the appeal building occupies a prominent corner position where its roof is readily apparent in views from Richmond Road and Morley Road.
6. In these views, the increased height of the roof which would step up above the chimney to the front of the building would be appreciable. While the angle of the roof would reflect the slope of the lower part of the existing mansard, the form would also be fundamentally altered through the loss of the dual angle slope to the side of the roof. Irrespective of the size of the windows and use of external materials to match, I consider that the additional height and bulk of the development would dominate the roof and proportions of the host building to the detriment of its architectural integrity and appearance.
7. In addition, the roof would be set back from the rear elevation of the host building and in comparison to the roof of No 378 to accommodate a balcony. I observed a terrace to No 374, but this is set well in from the street, and the mansard to No 376 and parapet wall to either side provide for screening. The balcony before me would be much more prominent, particularly in views from Morley Road on the approach to Richmond Road where it would be an unusual feature and would cause the roof to appear awkwardly truncated. The fairly large number of rooflights, including many which would not align with the windows below, would also add visual clutter to the roof. There are other examples of rooflights present nearby, but this would further draw the eye and increase the prominence of the development.
8. Given these factors, I cannot agree with the appellant that the development would be sympathetic nor that it would sit comfortably within the main roof. Moreover, the proposal would erode the apparent street scene uniformity and symmetry of the host terrace roofline. The stark contrast of the form of the roof seen against No 382 opposite which is currently of similar design would additionally be particularly visually jarring and would disrupt the composition of the buildings framing the Morley Road junction. As a consequence, I find that the proposal would harmfully erode the visual cohesion of the terrace, street scene and CA, and would stand out as a highly conspicuous and discordant addition to the area.
9. The appellant has referred to examples of dormers to the front of properties opposite Marble Hill Park and a mansard roof at The Old Town Hall, Richmond. However, these are not part of the same street scene or CA as the appeal site. Nor are they part of terraces of generally uniform appearance. Other examples of permissions granted for roof extensions are even more remote from the site. The circumstances of these examples are not therefore directly comparable, and I find that they do not offer meaningful support for the appeal proposal.
10. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of

preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. For the reasons above, I find that the development would be incongruous and visually intrusive, causing significant harm to the character and the appearance of the host building and the terraced group of which it is part, including No 378 which is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit. This would detract from the character and the appearance of the CA to the detriment of its significance.

11. Given the scale of the development and the localised nature of the effect, I find that the harm to the CA would be less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'), which goes on to advise that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of development.
12. The proposal would enlarge 2 existing flats including to provide an additional bedroom to Flat 3. This would make effective use of a previously developed site which would be supported by the Framework and London Plan Policy GG2. However, the number of dwellings would not be increased, and the small scale of the development means that the benefit of making effective use of the site and the weight that I give to this factor would be limited. Conversely, I give considerable importance and weight to the less than substantial harm that would be caused to the significance of the CA in accordance with the Framework. In my judgement, the public benefits of the proposal would not be sufficient to outweigh this harm.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building and of the Richmond Road (East Twickenham) CA. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policies LP 1, LP 3 and LP 4 of the Local Plan 2018 and Policy HC1 of the London Plan 2021 which broadly require, amongst other things, high quality development which respects local character and which conserves and where possible enhances the historic environment and heritage assets including conservation areas and Buildings of Townscape Merit. It would also be contrary to the Framework insofar as it seeks the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, as well as to the House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2015 which includes guidance that roof extensions should not dominate the original roof.

Living Conditions

14. The proposed balcony would afford views towards neighbouring properties from greater height than is currently possible from the site. Nevertheless, the main outlook towards the rear would be onto the frontage of 2 Morley Road and the side of this neighbour which does not include windows, and the neighbouring building would screen oblique views onto its garden. I also consider that separation to properties on the opposite side of Morley Road would be sufficient to ensure that oblique views in this direction would not cause an unacceptable loss of privacy for neighbours here. Notwithstanding that views would be likely to be prolonged while the balcony was in use, I find given these relationships that the proposal would not result in a significant increase in actual or perceived overlooking, nor in a harmful loss of privacy.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers through loss of privacy. As a consequence, I find no conflict with Policy LP 8 of the Local Plan which sets out that development will be required to protect the amenity and living conditions for occupants of new, existing, adjoining and neighbouring properties, and

includes a requirement that balconies do not raise unacceptable overlooking to nearby occupiers.

Conclusion

16. Although the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers would not be unacceptably harmed by the proposal, this does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the host building and the CA. The proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached.
17. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR