



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: 14 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/22/3306052

6 Manor Road, Teddington TW11 8BG

- 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 Kim Symes against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 22/0593/FUL, dated 7 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is 'alteration and extension of the two houses at 6 Manor Road'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Teddington Lock Conservation Area, including with regard to the effect on trees.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the Teddington Lock Conservation Area ('the CA'). The Conservation Area Statement notes that the CA forms the distinctive historic core of Teddington. From the evidence before me, the significance of the CA derives in part from its historic relationship with the River Thames, and the mix of development around the River originating from the 19th Century. The area around the appeal site has a mix of buildings of varied scale and form including modest two-storey cottages, more substantial Victorian semi-detached houses as well as a number of large, modern flatted blocks. Despite this variety, buildings are typically set within generous plots with significant landscaping around them. Together with the many mature trees which are present both within gardens and along streets, this provides for an attractive spacious and verdant quality which I consider makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the riverside setting, and to the significance of the CA.
4. The appeal site includes a two-storey building which is set back from Manor Road to the rear of a modern block of flats at 4 Manor Road. It is currently occupied as 2 dwellings, but the main parties indicate that it is a former Victorian coach house and stables originally associated with a property known as Sunnybank. The appeal building has been subject to varied alterations. These include a rear conservatory and a part single, part two-storey side extension of contrasting materials and with a large terrace which I agree with

the appellant are unsympathetic and of little architectural merit. The appellant also indicates that the building originally faced north west, away from Ferry Road, and that the existing roof is not original, having replaced a flat roof behind a parapet. In addition, it was apparent at my visit that there have been substantial alterations to the interior of the building including to provide staircases, and there is little in the way of any visible internal evidence of its historic fabric, layout or character. The relationship of the building with its surroundings has further been altered by changes which have occurred outside of the site including the demolition of Sunnybank and the construction of blocks of flats. In my view, the building appears residential, and I agree with the appellant that it is not readily legible as a former coach house.

5. Be that as it may, the simple original form and relatively modest proportions of the building remain readable, including in public views from the Manor Road Recreation Ground. In addition, it retains a number of original window openings, and I consider their arrangement, proportions and detailing to be an attractive and distinctive element of the building's overall composition and Victorian architecture. The building is not designated as a Building of Townscape Merit, and I have no firm evidence to indicate that it is otherwise remarkable architecturally, but it is part of the historic fabric of the area and an illustration of its past development. Notwithstanding the alterations carried out, it does in my judgement still make a positive, albeit only slight, contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the CA.
6. Furthermore, the large plot provides for a generous setting to the appeal building. The degree of openness and mature landscaping on and around the site can be appreciated including in public views from the Manor Road Recreation Ground and in glimpsed views from Ferry Road along the access to Quay West Court. Even if I were to accept the appellant's view that the building itself makes a neutral contribution to the CA, the site as a whole adds to the area's spacious and verdant character and appearance which contributes to the significance of the CA.
7. As part of the appeal, the building would be reorientated to face north west, reinstating the direction of the original principal elevation. I find that this would be of some modest benefit to its character, although the visual impact from outside of the site would be limited. The appellant also indicates that there would be repairs to defects and repointing of the elevations, and the proposed removal of the existing unsympathetic extensions could further offer an opportunity for enhancement of the character and appearance of the building.
8. However, the two-storey extension proposed to the side closest to No 4 would be of only very slightly lesser height and depth than the host building. I note that it has been designed to integrate with the building rather than to be subservient to it. Be that as it may, it would have a significant physical presence that would add considerably to the overall bulk and mass of the building. In addition, there would be 2 two-storey extensions that would project deeper than the new rear elevation of the building, as well as a single-storey front extension and a single-storey front and side wraparound extension. The appellant asserts that these would comply with guidance in the Council's House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2015 including in respect of their dimensions. That may be so when they are considered individually, but the combined extensions would significantly increase the bulk, mass and scale of the building, and I consider that they

would cumulatively amount to disproportionate additions that would overwhelm the modest proportions of the original host building.

9. I recognise that the appeal building is much smaller than nearby blocks of flats. However, it is also of clearly different character including as a result of its architecture which sets it apart from these more contemporary buildings. It is appreciated in this context, and I do not agree with the appellant that it appears disproportionately small. Nor do I consider its size to appear striking relative to the dwellings on Ferry Road given the variety in the form and scale of buildings in the area more widely.
10. Moreover, the very shallow angles of the roofslopes to the single-storey front and front and side wraparound extensions and the two-storey rear extensions would be inconsistent with the main roof. The appellant suggests that this would delineate them as new build elements, but I agree with the Council that they would appear squat and out of place. I also note that the 2 extensions to the front of the building and the 2 extensions to the rear are each shown as being of slightly different height to one another. Irrespective of the external materials and windows designed to complement the existing development, I find that these extensions would sit awkwardly against the host building. Given also the total number of extensions that would project differently from 3 of the building's elevations, I consider that the development would have a disjointed and overly complex appearance that would conflict with the building's simple original form. This would compound the unsympathetic nature of the development against the host building. In addition and even if I were to have found that the building itself currently had a neutral effect on the significance of the CA, the resulting development would in my view form a discordant feature that would detract from the character and appearance of the area.
11. I acknowledge that the set back of the building and screening by vegetation and No 4 mean that the development would not be readily visible from Manor Road. Public views of the single-storey extensions and of the two-storey rear extensions from elsewhere would also be limited. Nevertheless, views from surrounding properties also contribute to the character and appearance of the CA and are therefore important. Although the visual impact would be limited, I find for the above reasons that the development would dominate and overwhelm the modest original form and proportions of the building, and would undermine its remaining character. I do not dispute that the existing extensions are also unsympathetic, but they are of relatively small scale and clearly subordinate to the host building. I do not find their removal to offer a compelling justification for larger unsympathetic extensions which would further diminish the character and appearance of the host building and area.
12. Furthermore, the extensions would also bring development closer to the boundaries of the site with No 4 and to the front and rear of the building. Having regard to the generous size of the plot and the spacing that would remain to the boundary with the rear of Ferry Road, I am satisfied that the degree of plot coverage would not be uncharacteristic, and I do not share the Council's concerns that the development would be unduly cramped. However, the two-storey side extension now proposed would be of substantially larger overall bulk and mass at the upper level in comparison to the existing side extension which is of modest width at first floor level and with a roof set below the main building eaves. Although there would still be a clear gap and views between the development and No 4, I find that there would be a distinct and

notable reduction in separation between the buildings including in views from the Manor Road Recreation Ground. In my judgement, this would erode the existing impression of spaciousness with further detriment to the character and appearance of the CA, albeit that I consider the effect would only be slight.

Trees

13. The proposal also includes the removal of a Hornbeam tree (T8), and two groups of Leyland Cypresses (G2 and G4) from the site, and works to trees including a reduction in the height of a further Leyland Cypress group (G3). There are some views of these trees from the surrounding area, including from Manor Road and from the Manor Road recreation ground, and they contribute to the generally verdant character of the CA. Nevertheless, the Council has not disputed the appellant's evidence that the trees forming G2 are of low quality, poor form and limited future potential owing to a canker infection, nor the classification of T8, G3 and G4 as Category C (low quality). I am satisfied having regard to the quality of these trees and the contribution that they make to the character and appearance of the area that the suggested replacement planting which would include a larger number of trees, of native species, could provide adequate mitigation.
14. The application also indicated lifting work to a group of Fastigate Oaks along the boundary with 11-15 Ferry Road and the removal of alternate trees and specimens that have died, albeit that it was unclear from the submitted details which individual trees would be removed. However, the appellant has proposed as part of the appeal that only 4 of the trees which are dead or in a serious state of decline would be removed. They have also provided further detail of the lifting works which I note would not extend above the height of the boundary fencing. Subject to further detail of these works which could be secured by a planning condition, the effect of the development on the group would therefore be much more modest. Accordingly and based on the evidence before me and my observations at my visit, I consider that the contribution that this group makes to the character and appearance of the area would not be meaningfully harmed.
15. I have also considered concerns raised by the Council in relation to shading to the garden and ground floor of House 1 from two fairly large neighbouring trees (T17 and T24). However, these trees are to the north east of the site which would reduce potential for overshadowing. Moreover, while they are close to the small garden that would be positioned forward of House 1, the proposal also includes a further private garden of larger size to the new rear of the dwelling.
16. The Council has not detailed concerns that there would be inadequate light to this larger rear garden. The appellant has provided a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment 2022 ('DSA') which indicates that levels of sunlight to the rear garden would not meet current Building Research Establishment ('BRE') guideline standards at 21 March. However, the shortfall would be minimal, and sunlight at 21 June which is more representative of periods when occupiers would be likely to spend more time in the garden would be significantly in excess of guidelines. The DSA also indicates that the dwelling would meet current BRE guidelines for sunlight, and that subject to an additional rooflight being provided to the kitchen/dining room, there would also be acceptable daylight to the ground floor rooms. The DSA includes a part roof plan showing

the additional rooflight relied on, but I do not have a full set of amended plans which illustrate this change. Nevertheless, I consider having regard to the position within the roofslope and the relationship with the surrounding area and properties that this alteration could be the subject of a planning condition without causing prejudice to the interests of other parties were I to find the appeal to be otherwise acceptable.

17. In my judgement, the effect of nearby trees on light levels would be unlikely to significantly affect living conditions for occupiers of the development such that there would be irresistible future pressure for their reduction or removal.
18. For these reasons, I find that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to trees. In this regard, there would not be harm to the CA, and I find no conflict with requirements within Policies LP 1, LP 8 or LP 16 of the Local Plan 2018 broadly seeking the protection of existing trees, development that protects living conditions for occupiers, and that considers relationships with natural features.

Heritage Balance and Conclusions on Main Issue

19. In accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the LBCA'), I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. The effect of the proposal on the spaciousness of the CA would be slight, but would not preserve its character or its appearance. There would also be harm to the character and appearance of the host building and of the CA through the unsympathetic extensions. In combination, I find that these adverse impacts would outweigh the heritage benefits arising largely from the reinstatement of the direction of the principal elevation, repairs to the fabric, and the removal of the existing extensions and the use of external materials more in keeping with the original building and area. Although I have found the effect of the proposal on trees would be acceptable, I find accordingly that there would be harm to the significance of the CA overall.
20. Given the small scale of the development and that the visual impact would be limited and localised affecting only a small part of the CA, I consider the harm to its significance overall would be modest, and certainly less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). It is therefore necessary to weigh the public benefits of the proposal against this harm.
21. The development has been designed to improve the internal layout of the dwellings and would provide additional living accommodation. The reorientation of the building would provide for a back-to-back relationship with properties on Ferry Road and larger areas of defensible space for both dwellings on the site. However, while I appreciate that the existing arrangement of accommodation and amenity space at the site may be less than ideal, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that it is unsuitable for occupation; indeed both dwellings appeared to be occupied, and I therefore consider that these benefits would be mainly private. That said, use of the spiral staircases currently serving House 2 would be likely to be impractical for some, and I find that the improved accessibility offered by the provision of traditional staircases would be a benefit, albeit very modest. The proposed landscaping scheme including planting of native species could benefit biodiversity, but I have no clear details to demonstrate the extent of any benefit which limits the weight

that I afford to this factor. There would also be some limited benefits associated with improvements to insulation and heating to meet current Building regulations, raised floor levels to increase flood resilience, and the addition of a fire sprinkler system. The weight that I afford to these benefits is limited though in the absence of firm evidence to show that they could not be delivered without the appeal scheme.

22. Although the harm to the CA would be modest, the Framework outlines that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets which are irreplaceable, and the harm to the CA attracts considerable importance and weight. Even taken together, I consider that the limited public benefits of the proposal would not be sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused to the CA.
23. Notwithstanding my findings in relation to trees, I therefore conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the appeal building and it would fail to conserve or enhance the character and the appearance of the Teddington Lock CA overall. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policies LP 1 and LP 3 of the Local Plan insofar as they seek high quality development which respects local character and which conserves and where possible enhances the historic environment and heritage assets including conservation areas. It would also be contrary to the Framework insofar as it seeks conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Other Matters

24. The Council refers to a reduction in the spacious landscape setting of 'the former boathouse' as a concern. Reading its report as a whole which also refers to the building no longer being read as a 'modest former boathouse', this would seem to me to be an erroneous description of the appeal building, rather than a reference to The Boathouse on Ferry Road which is a Grade II listed building. I further note that its evidence does not explicitly allege that there would be harm to any listed buildings. I am nevertheless mindful of the duty under section 66(1) of the LBCA for special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. However, given the harm identified above and that I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter further as it could not alter my decision.
25. I acknowledge support for the proposal from an interested party, alluding to uncertainty over potential future development on the appeal site, but this does not alter my conclusion that the current appeal would cause unacceptable harm to the CA.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above, I find that 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. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR