



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2023

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/D/22/3294387

146 Watling Street, Radlett WD7 7JH

- 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 Ms M Sandler against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/2388/HSE, dated 13 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side and rear extension.
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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 Radlett (South) Conservation Area (RSCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to an end-of-terrace dwelling forming part of a group of similarly designed Edwardian dwellings across three short terraces and a semi-detached pair. These dwellings are identified as 'landmark buildings' within the Radlett (South) Conservation Area Appraisal 2012 (the CAA), being noted specifically for their strong presence in the street scene.
4. The proposal seeks a ground floor extension which would wrap around the side and rear of the outrigger. I am aware that planning permission was granted in October 2021¹ for a separate rear extension to the dwelling. I have had regard to this permission as a material planning consideration.
5. The significance of the wider RSCA arises from its transitional character incorporating elements of naturalistic landscape rather than more formal urban characteristics. This includes the green character created by trees along the Cobden Hill/Watling Street road corridor and the glimpsed views of fields in the Green Belt to the east, interspersed with buildings in traditional materials and styles.
6. I saw that the group within which the appeal dwelling sits has been subject to various single storey rear extensions, although none, as far as I could see or have been made aware, wrap around the existing rear outrigger of the dwelling in an L-shaped design as is proposed by the appeal scheme. Consequently, and notwithstanding some variety to the specific design of other extensions, neighbouring dwellings in the group have largely retained their original

¹ Council Ref 21/1246/HSE

planform, which maintains a degree of consistency across the group at the rear. Although the rear elevations are not public facing and are not specifically identified in the CAA as being of particular interest or making a specific contribution to the significance of the RSCA, their continued consistency of design and appearance adds to the overall quality of the dwellings and reinforces their status as landmark buildings within the conservation area.

7. The proposed extension would extend wider than the original outrigger. Its broad footprint, shallower roof pitches and large fenestration would create a horizontal emphasis to the rear elevation that would fail to reflect the proportions of the existing building. This would be exacerbated by the wraparound nature of the extension, which would envelop the lower part of the outrigger. Together with the open plan internal layout which would be discernible through the large doors, the original shape of the building would no longer be legible at the ground floor. Though at the rear, the extension would be visible from the communal rear access running alongside the site, and from neighbouring dwellings.
8. In contrast, the approved extension would extend the depth of the rear outrigger in a similar manner to other dwellings in the group. Although it would project slightly deeper than the extension now proposed, it would not extend beyond the width of the outrigger, thus retaining the side lightwell. As a result, the scheme would better preserve the original planform of the dwelling and would retain the fenestration to the dining room. Consequently, I do not consider that the existence of this scheme as a fall-back position merits positive weight towards granting the proposal, as it would not have a more harmful effect on the significance of the RSCA when considered as a whole.
9. I note other examples of extensions highlighted by the appellant. The examples at 1 and 5 Upper Station Road relate to a different street, context and conservation area, whilst that at 126 Watling Street was for a separate infill dwelling, not an extension to one of the existing landmark buildings of the group. The example at 152 Watling Street is close to the appeal site but is of a markedly different form. I also note this is the end dwelling of the group with slightly different surroundings. However, without full particulars of this scheme, I am unable to draw any comparisons with the scheme before me. Therefore, I do not find these other examples determinative, and have considered this appeal on its own merits.
10. Overall, for the reasons set out, the proposal would not represent high quality design that respects the character and integrity of the property and surrounding historic rear elevations. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed scheme would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance, or heritage significance, of the RSCA, contrary to Policies SP1, CS14 and CS22 of the Hertsmere Core Strategy (January 2013), Policies SADM29 and SADM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (November 2016) and Policy HD3 of the Radlett Neighbourhood Plan which together require development to conserve or enhance the historic environment of the Borough and to secure high quality design.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. The harm identified to the significance of the RSCA would be less than substantial, in the language of the Framework. Paragraph 202 advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the

significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

12. I have already acknowledged the appellant's fall-back position. For the reasons set out, the fall-back scheme would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the RSCA in the manner that the appeal scheme would. Consequently, the fall-back scheme would not justify allowing the appeal proposal and does not attract favourable weight.
13. Otherwise, there would be no more than limited private benefits to the appellant in terms of additional living space, and some modest, temporary economic benefits for local construction firms. These benefits, taken together, would be insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the RSCA.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out, the proposal would conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. This conflict is not outweighed by the other material considerations in this case. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR