



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2023

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/22/3308120

Guildford House, 99 Lacy Road, London, SW15 1NR

- 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 Vera Road Limited against the decision of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2022/2803, dated 1 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 26 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as "alterations including erection of additional floor of accommodation; formation of roof terraces at fourth floor level with 1.1m high screen surround to create 1x 2 bedroom flat."
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Charlwood Road and Lifford Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within the Charlwood Road and Lifford Street Conservation Area (the CA). In determining this appeal, I have accordingly paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (the Appraisal) states that the CA is made up of five distinct character areas, dated approximately from 1830 to 1900, which represent different phases of development and varying styles of architecture ranging from a spacious rural feel to narrow and tightly packed to a more urban character related to the development of Putney town centre.
4. The appeal site falls within the Redgrave Road character area, which the Appraisal states comprises mainly groups of two storey semi-detached and terraced houses dating from the late nineteenth century. The appeal property is recognised in the Appraisal as a positive building within the character area. During my site visit I walked along Lacy Road and some of the neighbouring streets, including all those within the character area. I agree with the general assessment of the character area, its contribution to the CA and that the appeal property is a positive building, notwithstanding that it is not individually addressed in the Appraisal. The building is of a scale and appearance in keeping with its surroundings. It complements the general character and appearance of the Lacy Road street scene and surrounding area. It contributes

to the significance of the CA as a heritage asset, which I find derives in considerable part from the character of the buildings within it, and their relationships to one another.

5. The appeal property lies on the edge of the character area and is a detached building separated from the neighbouring three-storey terrace by a narrow street. There is a two-storey outbuilding to the other side of the property, and it is principally within the context of these two neighbouring buildings and the more distant house and school on the junction of Lacy Road and Charlwood Road that the building is seen.
6. The proposed additional storey would be most prominently visible in views east along Lacey Road. Within this context, the additional floor would make the building much taller than the two-storey outbuilding and it would be taller than the adjoining terrace, which has a shallow pitched roof with a hipped end facing the appeal site. The extended building would therefore appear as a dominant feature in the street scene, significantly taller than the terrace whereas the existing building is of a similar size to the terrace and provides a pleasing terminus that is in proportion with it.
7. From the back gardens to houses on Charlwood Road and Redgrave Road the appeal site can be seen in the context of the terrace and outbuilding in a way that is not possible from Lacy Road due to the absence of a pavement on the opposite side of the street. From this perspective the additional storey would be seen as an abrupt step up in height to four storeys that would be out of keeping with the established street scene.
8. From the east, the additional storey would be seen against the backdrop of the roof of the neighbouring house and the ornate dormers of Hotham Primary School, which are visible from Lacy Road, and within the context of the chimney stacks to the neighbouring terrace. In longer views from this perspective, the mansard roof would not be a harmful feature as it would appear of a scale generally in keeping with the wider roofscape visible along Lacy Road. In closer views from the east, the lack of a pavement on the opposite side of Lacy Road would restrict views of the appeal property, limiting the visual impact of the proposal.
9. The appellants have drawn my attention to several instances of four-storey development within or near to the CA. The property at 15-17 Spencer Walk is the most like the appeal property of those identified, as it is a four-storey building of relatively narrow width compared to the surrounding two and three storey buildings. It does however have subordinate elements to either side which step down as a transition to its lower neighbours. Given the overall similarities I consider this attracts moderate weight in the appeal proposal's favour.
10. Two of the identified buildings are school buildings, and therefore of limited relevance to the appeal proposal given the differences in scale and context. I have noted that Hotham Primary School forms part of the wider context for the appeal proposal, however. St Mary's Hall and the Glass House are new four-storey developments that sit next to older buildings of similar height and scale and therefore appear proportionate within their street scenes. Felsham House is a four-storey building with a mansard roof as the top floor. It is therefore somewhat like the appeal proposal in appearance, but is of a substantially different scale, so wide and prominent in the street scene that it informed the

later development at St Mary's Hall. It therefore differs significantly from the appeal property, which is a much narrower building seen in the context of the long terrace next to it. The terrace of properties on Felsham Road are three storey townhouses with additional rooms in the roof created with dormer windows. These exist in a street scene with more variety of height than Lacey Road, and the dormers do not add to the height of these houses, unlike the proposed additional storey to the appeal property. The appellants have also referred to properties at 96-100 Felsham Road, but this is either a second reference to St Mary's Hall or to a group of neighbouring properties of three storeys in height. A further detached four storey house at 24 Charlwood Road is noted as an example of a property with a mansard roof form, although in that instance it sits between terraces of similar height, one of which has mansard roofs, so does not appear incongruous in the immediate street scene. Overall, these examples attract little weight due to the differences I have identified.

11. The appellants have also drawn a 2021 appeal decision on Redgrave Road to my attention. This was granted with the Inspector finding that the existing house made a negative contribution to the significance of the CA, and that the scheme overall would make a positive contribution. It therefore differs significantly from the proposal before me. A further appeal decision at Isis Street is referred to, but I do not have the details of that proposal or the Inspector's reasoning before me. I therefore cannot be certain to what degree that development resembles the proposal before me in its detail or context.
12. The 2003 permission at 22 Charlwood Road is noted but was granted under a wholly different policy regime and I have little information of the considerations at that time before me. I do note that the resulting building provided part of the context for the approval of a mansard roof at 24 Charlwood Road, immediately next to 22, which I have addressed above.
13. The appeal proposal is for an additional storey to a single building within the CA. The visual impact of that additional storey would be limited to certain viewpoints. There is variety of scale and height within the wider CA, including instances of taller buildings in areas of predominantly regular height. However, within the immediate surroundings the uniformity of the neighbouring terrace is the key element in assessing the appeal proposal. Having regard to the size of the CA and the relatively limited visual impact of the appeal proposal on its character and appearance, the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to its significance.
14. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that great weight be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm, that is to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. In this instance, there would be a benefit from the creation of 1 additional apartment, supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes., and delivering a Community Infrastructure Levy contribution. The appeal property is in a sustainable location close to local amenities. The development would be a more efficient use of the appeal site, and more sustainable than a redevelopment. The proposal would include the use of air source heat pumps. There would be a temporary benefit from the creation of construction jobs associated with the project. The Council has failed to meet its

housing targets in recent years, which adds further weight to the benefit of creating additional housing.

16. The appellants note that the development would also result in repairs to the building's chimneys, but it is not apparent that this is dependent on the appeal proposal, nor to what extent repairs are necessary. This therefore attracts very little weight in the overall balance.
17. The benefits of the appeal proposal attract considerable weight given the shortfall in housing delivery. However, when set against the great weight I am required to give to the conservation of the significance of the CA those benefits would be outweighed by the harm in this instance.
18. Consequently, the appeal proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and the appearance of the CA. It would therefore conflict with Policy IS 3 of the Core Strategy and Policies DMS 1, DMS 2 and DMH 5 of the Development Management Policies Document. Taken together, these policies require that the heritage of the borough be protected and that roof extensions not be visually intrusive or harm the street scene.

Conclusion

19. The appeal proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no considerations to lead me to determine this appeal otherwise than in accordance with it. Consequently, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR