

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 April 2023

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/22/3312487
107 Rosecroft Gardens, Twickenham TW2 7PU

- 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 Paul Saggars Associates Ltd against the decision of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Council.
 - The application Ref 22/2250/HOT, dated 18 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2022.
 - Planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing front garden wall and the construction of a replacement front garden wall and an entrance porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Rosecroft Gardens Conservation Area.

Preliminary Matter

3. The planning application form refers to the need for retrospective planning permission for the garden wall which was in situ at the time of my site visit, and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a semi-detached bungalow located within the Rosecroft Gardens Conservation Area which was constructed in the 1930s; as highlighted within the Conservation Area 46 Statement, here cohesive rows of bungalows in garden plots can be found set behind small, well planted front gardens and low boundary walls. They are of painted render over a brick plinth with brick surrounds to doorways and linking band courses and have curved bays below deeply projecting eaves and plain tile roofs.
5. I note that some of the bungalows have been extended over time with a few having had front porches added. The majority of houses do however have their original façades, with a distinct absence of porch or canopy over the front door, albeit with replacement fenestration.
6. The proposed porch would completely conceal the aforementioned brick surround and linking band course to either side which would erode the special

and historic character of the host dwelling. I note that one of the problems and pressures highlighted within the Conservation Area Statement is the loss of traditional architectural features, due to unsympathetic alterations and I consider that the proposed porch could be treated as such. I accept that it would be modest in its proportions, but nonetheless it would constitute a retrograde step which would give rise to the incremental erosion of the significance of the designated heritage asset; notwithstanding that the Conservation Area Character Appraisal does stipulate that proposals for the creation of porches will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

7. I accept that the provision of a traditional timber entrance door would in itself better reflect the historic significance of the wider Conservation Area and I can see no reason as to why this would be unacceptable to the Council; however, that is not the sole nature of the proposal before me, and the imposition of the porch would have a far more deleterious appearance upon the host dwelling. Other examples cited by the appellant demonstrate the incongruous nature of such porches, particularly where only one has been added to one half of a pair of semi-detached houses. I note the approval of such a feature on 92 Gladstone Avenue, although it is not for me to comment on the appropriateness of this or otherwise, but the very fact that there are several instances where brick detailing has been covered by porches does not mean that such changes should continue unabated.
8. With regard to the front boundary wall, such treatments are a common feature within the street scene although their designs and materials do vary quite significantly. The new red brick wall appears to have been constructed to a high standard, notwithstanding the Council's desire for it to match that next door. However, bearing in mind that the proposal would not give rise to an 'in principle' loss of front boundary treatment nor would it give rise to the loss of the existing front garden I find that this element of the proposal in itself to be acceptable.
9. Notwithstanding this, I consider that the proposed front porch extension would result in a visually intrusive and unsympathetic form of development which would negatively impact the host property and would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, giving rise to less than substantial harm to the Designated Heritage Asset. No public benefits have been advanced and therefore none exist that outweigh this harm and consequently I consider that the appeal should fail on this basis, with the scheme contrary to Policies LP1 and LP3 of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan (2018) which require all development to be of high architectural and urban design quality and to conserve and, where possible, take opportunities to make a positive contribution to the historic environment of the Borough.

Conclusion

10. Therefore, having regard to the above and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR