Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/23/3315920
1 Bensbury Close, London SW15 3TB

- 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 Meyer against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
- The application ref 2022/3902, dated 20 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 November 2022.
- The development proposed is for the installation of 9x Solar Photovoltaic Panels on main pitched roof, within 200mm of the roof plane.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for is for the installation of 9x Solar Photovoltaic Panels on main pitched roof, within 200mm of the roof plane at 1 Bensbury Close, London SW15 3TB in accordance with the terms of the application ref 2022/3902, dated 20 September 2022, subject to the following conditions:

   1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

   2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: location plan, proposed PV roof plan, proposed PV roof elevations.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the terrace and the surrounds, including the Putney Heath Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, end-terrace house on Bensbury Close, near the junction between Heathview Road and Portsmouth Road. The neighbourhood is predominantly residential in nature.

4. Being situated in the CA, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm

amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

5. The special architectural and historic interest of this part of the CA derives from the rural setting of the heath. Historical associations and developments over the course of the early twentieth century and the incorporation of some of the more urban themes occurring on its borders have also formed the area's character. The CA appraisal states that the small two storey mews houses in Bensbury Close were originally the stables and grooms' accommodation for Bowling Green House. The joined buildings are rendered with steeply pitched clay-tile roofs, and the different door and window sizes and their different heights add to the charm.

6. The proposed solar array would be larger than the adjacent roof lights on the property, and of different detail in terms of profile and framing. Although the panels would only stand proud of the roof by some 200mm, they would assume a contemporary and sleek appearance atop the existing tile roof. Consequently, the positive contribution the appeal site makes to the historic character of the CA would be reduced, albeit to a limited extent.

7. This notwithstanding, I am aware that the Framework states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, and recognises that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

8. The proposal would have a positive impact in terms of localised energy production and a reduction in energy consumption from the grid. Given the limited harm to the significance of the CA, I conclude that the environmental benefits of the scheme are a sufficient consideration to outweigh the detriment caused and thus to warrant the appeal.

9. On this basis, the proposal would be in accordance with Policies DMS1, DMS2 and DMH5 of the Wandsworth Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (March 2016), which seek to ensure development is of an acceptable scale and design and conserves and enhances the significance, character and appearance of the borough's historic environment. It would also be consistent with the Framework, which supports renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Conditions

10. I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition to the standard implementation condition, the approved plans are listed for certainty.

Conclusion

11. Based on the above, the appeal is allowed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR