

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2023

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 June 2023.

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/23/3318901
15 Courtlands Avenue, Hampton TW12 3NS

- 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 Miss Georgina Tanner against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond.
 - The application, Ref. 22/3607/HOT, dated 4 December 2022 was refused by notice dated 2 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is a part one storey, part two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling; the semi-detached pair of Nos. 13 & 15, and the Courtland Avenue street scene, and (ii) the effect on nearby trees.

Reasons

3. On the first issue, I saw on my visit that Courtlands Avenue exhibits a variety of dwelling types, designs and sizes which result in a pleasing character for this residential area. The appeal dwelling is one half of a semi-detached pair with No. 13 and with their front elevations retaining much of the same original design the houses make a positive contribution to the street scene. The exception to this symmetry is the existing ground floor side extension and although flat roofed it is in my view read as a positive addition to the building.
 4. The appeal scheme is to extend this extension at ground floor level but with the proposed addition increasing to two storeys at the rear. The neighbouring property, No. 17 Courtlands Avenue, is a building of entirely different appearance and with its significant gap to No. 15, especially at first floor level, it sits comfortably in the street scene alongside Nos. 13 and 15. However this large gap would have the disadvantage of allowing the proposed two storey rear addition to form part of the public realm.
 5. The set back of over 8m from the front would not be a conventional side addition to ensure that the bulk and massing of the addition is subordinate to the existing dwelling and the pair. And whilst the development would indeed achieve that subordination, the officer's report is in my view correct in its observation that *'it would still be visible from the public view and the large set*
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back makes the proposed scheme look disjointed and therefore not integrated with the original dwelling as it joins on to the outrigger which is not visible from the road’.

6. The Council’s House Extensions and External Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (‘SPD’) 2015 states that side and rear extensions should harmonise with the building’s original appearance, either by integrating with the house or being made to appear as an obvious addition. I consider that the two storey element in this case appears too much as an uncoordinated ‘bolt on’ to the existing building, whilst its rearward position has the effect of appearing as an incongruous rather than an obvious addition. I additionally consider that the absence of a window in the elevation facing the road would detract from the appearance of the extension.
7. I have noted the comparisons in the grounds of appeal with other developments considered to be similar to the appeal scheme and set a precedent. However, the combination of the development details with the particular circumstances of the site and its location in this case are such that these examples carry only limited weight in my decision.
8. Overall, because of the shortcomings on this issue I find that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling; the semi-detached pair of Nos. 13 & 15, and the Courtland Avenue street scene. This would be in harmful conflict with Policy LP1 of the Richmond Local Plan 2018; the Council’s SPD and Section 12: ‘Achieving Well Designed Places’ of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
9. On the second issue, the Council takes the view that there is insufficient information in the application to ensure that the effect on trees is acceptable and that this would be contrary to Local Plan Policy LP16. In some cases the potential threat to trees, in particular those covered by a Tree Preservation Order, is such that it may preclude the principle of development.
10. However, in this case I take the view that if the development had been acceptable on the first main issue, a condition could have been imposed on the permission to ensure that the trees would not be harmed. My agreement with the appellant on this matter does not though override the objection in terms of the effect of the scheme in terms of the character and appearance of the host building and Courtlands Avenue.
11. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR