



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2023

by A Veevers BA(Hons) DipBCon MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/W/22/3309849

1 Auckland Road, Wandsworth, London SW11 1EW

- 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 Wandle Housing Association against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2022/2781, dated 4 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'replacement of windows to UPVC windows to the flats within No 1 Auckland Road'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the application form, leaving out words that are not acts of development. Although different to that on the decision notice, no confirmation that a change was agreed has been provided.
3. The uPVC windows have been installed and therefore I am considering this appeal retrospectively.
4. When I visited the appeal site, I was able to clearly see the installed windows on the front elevation of the building from Auckland Road. However, I could not see the rear elevation from public views and I was unable to gain access to the rear private outdoor space of the property. Upon my request, the appellant provided photographs of the rear elevation of the property and both main parties agreed that they could be used in my assessment of the appeal. On this basis, I am satisfied that no prejudice would occur to any party as a result of my consideration of the photographs and have determined the appeal on that basis.
5. The Wandsworth Local Plan 2023-2038 (WLP) was adopted by the Council while the appeal was under consideration. This supersedes the Wandsworth Core Strategy 2016 (CS) and the Wandsworth Development Management Policies Document 2016 (WDMPD). Both main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the implications of this newly adopted development plan. Therefore, I have considered the appeal having regard to the newly adopted WLP and am satisfied that any references made to it within this decision would not be unreasonable to the parties.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the significance of the host building as a locally listed building.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is a terraced property with four floors of accommodation, subdivided into flats and located within a primarily residential area. The property is the end building in the distinctive gabled terraced row. The front elevations of all the properties in the row are set behind railings and staircases, also enclosed by railings, which lead up from the street-level pavement to the front doors. This results in an imposing presence to the row and a cohesive rhythm and character in the context of the surrounding buildings. Adjacent to the appeal building, and separated by a small gap, is a more modern flatted development. Nonetheless, the appeal building and the row within which it sits contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.
8. The Council explain that numbers 1 to 37 (odds) Auckland Road (the row), including the appeal property, were constructed in the 1860's and are of significant architectural or historical interest and are locally listed buildings (LLBs). The Council's Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document 2016 states Auckland Road represents a pleasing terrace of three storey buildings with roof storey being of yellow stock brick construction with render to lower floors. The significance of the building as a locally listed building (LLB) and therefore a non-designated heritage asset, is derived from its age and local vernacular which is consistent with the other properties in the row.
9. While prominent characteristics of the row include the steeply pitched roof line and flat roof infill, stone window framing and external materials, the timber sash window design also contributes significantly to the defining historical and architectural feature of the row as LLBs.
10. UPVC windows have been installed in all window openings on the front and rear elevations, including a uPVC door and windows in the front basement opening. Evidence presented on the plans submitted with the application indicates that the bulkier uPVC windows and basement door are of distinguishably different materials and fenestration pattern to the timber sash windows that existed on the building prior to their replacement. I note from my site visit that they are unsympathetic in form and detailing to the original window style found on other properties within the row.
11. The uPVC windows have a significantly thicker frame than the original design, as acknowledged by the appellant. They consequently occupy a higher proportion of the window opening in contrast to the slender profile adopted by the original design. There is no thin glazing bar in the central pane of the ground floor front window, which is a feature of the original designs. Similarly, there are no horizontal thin glazing bars in the front basement door and windows. The ground floor front window is arched and the uPVC window that has been installed has a square window panel which is conspicuously at odds with the curvature of the opening. Moreover, the windows are casement with the lower pane of the window top hung to open outwards with a protruding central element. This is in stark contrast to the original sash openings with 'horn' detailing prevalent along the row and evident as the original style.

12. For the reasons noted above, the uPVC windows are not similar to the original fenestration and do not preserve the character and appearance of the row, because they introduce modern features which fail to incorporate important aspects of the original design and a material that is alien to the origins and character of the building. They represent a detrimental change in appearance and a loss of character, causing moderate harm to the significance of the LLB.
13. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the modern material and design of the windows against the traditional timber sash windows at 3 Auckland Road and other properties in the row exacerbate the difference between the consistent and regular appearance of the original windows, and the discordant style and material used at the appeal site. Views along the street and the architectural details and materials employed in the row are key to the appreciation of its merits and an understanding of its significance as LLBs. The inappropriate changes to the window design and the materials employed at the appeal site diminishes the existing coherent character and the overall aesthetic value of the row.
14. Although not readily visible from external vantage points, the rear elevation of the appeal site does not exhibit any external clutter and appears to be little altered since built. The design and uPVC material of the windows contribute to a diminution in the architectural quality and character of the rear elevation of the property and the row as a whole and are consequently harmful to the significance of the building as a NDHA.
15. For all of these reasons, I find that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the LLB, the row of LLBs, and the surrounding area, and it would undermine the significance of the appeal building as a non-designated heritage asset.
16. Even though the building is not a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 203 of the Framework sets out that the effect of development on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement should be taken having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. As described above, the development results in the loss of important features of all the original window design and material. There is a moderate level of harm to the character and appearance of the property, and hence its significance.
17. The appellant refers me to other uPVC windows that can be found in the row and on the opposite side of Auckland Road. However, I have not been provided with the full details of these cases, although the Council state that none of the uPVC windows within the street have planning permission. I note from my observations on site that the majority of the dwellings in the row have timber sash windows incorporating the original design and appearance. The character and appearance of these buildings has been preserved within the local context. The properties on the opposite side of Auckland Road display a different character and appearance to the appeal building and the row. In any event, the existence of other inappropriate replacement windows does not justify further harmful alterations.
18. There is no substantive evidence before me that the previous windows were beyond repair or could not be viably repaired. Even if repairs were not possible or viable, it has not been demonstrated whether appropriately designed timber

replacement windows and doors which were regularly and well maintained would require replacement more frequently than uPVC windows and doors or could not overcome issues relating to carbon dioxide emissions and energy efficiency at a comparable cost to uPVC. Neither has it been robustly demonstrated how the development improves the quality of accommodation or economic benefits of occupiers of the building. I therefore give little weight to these matters.

19. Overall, I find on balance that there are no benefits that outweigh the harmful effect of the development on the significance of the LLB, nor the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
20. I therefore conclude that the development causes harm to the significance of the LLB and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly, the development conflicts with Policies LP1, LP3, and LP5 of the WLP which, amongst other things, require that development preserves and, wherever possible, enhances the significance and appearance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets and is in keeping with the character of the locality.
21. In addition, the development does not accord with guidance contained within the Supplementary Planning Document: Housing (2016) or the aims of the Framework that, together, seek to ensure developments heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and which make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
22. The Council refers to Policy SDS1 of the WLP as a replacement to Policies PL1 and IS3 of the WCS which were set out in the decision notice. However, Policy SDS1 is an overarching spatial strategy policy which is not directly relevant to or determinative in assessing the main issue in this case.

Other Matters

23. Matters relating to the windowsill of the appeal property is not a matter within my jurisdiction in determining this appeal.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, the development conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Veervers

INSPECTOR