



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2023

by Michael J Muston BA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/23/3324053

26 Albany Road, Windsor SL4 1HL

- 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 and Mrs Harper against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 23/00892, dated 11 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two rear dormer conversion with two roof lights to the front slope.
-

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 Inner Windsor Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within the Inner Windsor Conservation Area. The Conservation Area (CA) lies south of the historic core of Windsor and predominantly consists of housing constructed in the 19th century. As the Council's adopted Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA), adopted in 2015, says, *"it includes a variety of building sizes, from modest cottages to grand detached villas"*. Its significance stems in large part from its history and from the quality of the buildings and spaces within the CA.
4. The appeal site lies within an area described in the CAA as *"Minor Streets"*. Albany Road comprises rows of two storey terraced houses on either side of the road, dating from the mid to late 19th century. The elevations to the houses are varied in respect of materials and detailed design. However, the terraces on both sides of the road constitute a harmonious whole that gives Albany Road considerable character.
5. The rear elevations of the houses on the northern side of the road are visible from a car park serving Alexandra Court, to the rear of Nos 2-14 Albany Road, and from Garfield Place. As a result, I was able to see on my site visit that, whilst rooflights are a common feature in the rear-facing roofslopes on this side of Albany Road, dormer windows are not. The rear elevation of No 26 is clearly visible from Russell Street, at the entrance to Garfield Place, as well as from

Garfield Place itself. The roofs, including that at No 26, unadorned by dormer windows and with chimneys between each house, contribute to the character and appearance of the CA when seen from public viewpoints to the north.

6. The proposed dormer windows would be a significant feature on the rear elevation of No 26. They would be large, with windows wider than those on the floors below, and would appear as unacceptably dominant features on the roof slope of No 26, and in the context of the rear roof slopes of other neighbouring properties on this side of Albany Road. They would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
7. The appellants have drawn my attention to other examples of dormer windows in the area, including at 13 Albany Road and at 22 Devereux Road. I was able to see some of these other examples, including two on north-facing roof slopes in Devereux Road. However, they can only be glimpsed from public viewpoints, and are much less visible in the street scene than the appeal proposal would be. I am also told by the Council that the example at 22 Devereux Road was a replacement for a flat-roofed dormer. The existence of these other examples does not justify permitting development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the CA.
8. The Council has not raised any objections to the two proposed rooflights, and I agree that this element of the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
9. I consider that the proposed dormer windows, for the reasons set out above, would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) says that *"when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation"* and that *"this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."* The Framework goes on to say in paragraph 202 that *"where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal"*.
10. I have not had my attention drawn to any public benefits that would arise from the proposal. I therefore conclude that the proposal neither preserves nor enhances the character or appearance of the Inner Windsor Conservation Area, and would harm the CA's significance as a heritage asset, contrary to Policies HE1 and QP3 of the Borough Local Plan 2013-2033, and Policy HER.01 of the Windsor Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2034. These policies seek, amongst other things, development that conserves and enhances the historic environment, respects and enhances the historic character of the area.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Michael J Muston

INSPECTOR