



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2023

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc RTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/23/3318512

8 & 10 Short Road, Chiswick, London W4 2QU

- 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 Karacay and Allen against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01018/8-10/P1, dated 5 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 14 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'the joint construction of a front and rear mansard loft for their respective buildings and changing from a pitched roof to a flat roof over the existing outrigger for No. 10 Short Road W4 2QU.'
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Chiswick House Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Short Road is a residential cul-de-sac in the Chiswick House Conservation Area ('the CA'). The Chiswick House Conservation Area Appraisal 2021 ('the CAA') indicates that the primary architectural and historic interest of the CA lies with Chiswick House and its grounds, but the surrounding late nineteenth to early twentieth century residential streets which include Short Road are also noted as of interest. In part, this interest results from the high quality of the design and the degree to which they respond to Chiswick House and Gardens. The CAA further describes Short Road together with Paxton Road and Sutherland Road as exceptionally well-preserved streets of terraced houses, mostly dating from around the 1870s.
4. Apart from Linen House which is a large art deco/moderne style building at the head of the cul-de-sac, Short Road is predominantly characterised by terraced buildings which are positioned on consistent building lines fronting the streets. There is some variety in the detailed design and form of the buildings making up the terraces which include a mix of roof types, but in many cases they comprise pairs or groups of 3 buildings of matching form and designs. Most of the buildings are also of similar overall proportions and have similar fenestration patterns and features including decorative brick detailing over windows and arched entrances. Although the street is not uniform, these factors result in an overall impression of coherence and rhythm to the buildings which contributes positively to its character and appearance, and which I consider adds to the significance of the CA.

5. The appeal relates to 8 and 10 Short Road, a pair of adjoining terraced dwellings of matching but mirrored design to one another. The dwellings include arched entrances, butterfly roof forms set behind a front parapet wall, and rear outrigger projections, albeit that these projections differ in scale and proportions. The dwellings sit comfortably as part of the general pattern of development along Short Road, and I agree with their identification in the CAA as positive contributors to the CA.
6. The proposal includes mansard roof extensions with front dormers to both Nos 8 and 10. These would notably increase the bulk and mass of the upper level of the dwellings. However, the mansards would sit behind the existing front parapet walls. They would also be set back from the rear of the dwellings with an appreciable gap of sufficient depth to provide visual distinction to the existing butterfly roofs so that they would remain clearly readable. Although the proposal would alter the scale and form of the dwellings, I find that the butterfly roof profile would not be overwhelmed to the extent that it would be lost as a feature, and I am satisfied that the design and proportions of the mansards would be suitably sympathetic to the individual host buildings.
7. Furthermore, the mansards would not be significantly taller than the pitched roof to the adjacent building at 6 Short Road. I accept that they would project forward of the ridgeline of this neighbour and the roof of Nicholas Mews to the other side of the site. However, I have already noted that roof types along Short Road vary, and I saw that 23 and 25 Short Road opposite also have mansard roofs which project forward of their neighbour at 21 Short Road. The unaltered butterfly roofs to the appeal dwellings are also relatively unusual in this part of the CA, and are not a predominant characteristic of buildings on Short Road. In this context, the height and scale of the development would not appear incongruous or out of keeping, and I find that the proposal would not harmfully disrupt the overall roofline so as to diminish the impression of coherence in the street scene which currently contributes to the significance of the CA.
8. However, the appeal dwellings form and are appreciated as a pair. While the proposal is for mansards to both Nos 8 and 10 which the appellants comment seek to deliver a symmetrical approach, I am concerned that there could be a situation where only one of the extensions were actually carried out. This would result in a marked loss of symmetry. Short Road is fairly narrow, and trees provide some screening of the appeal buildings and roofs, but I saw that the existing chimneys are visible from the street. Given the greater height and closer proximity of any mansard to the front of the dwellings, it would be similarly appreciable and would unbalance the pair to the detriment of their architectural integrity, character and appearance. Despite the variety in the wider roofline and that the roofline on Short Road is not specifically highlighted as important in the CAA, I find that such a form of development across the pair would stand out awkwardly and would be unduly prominent causing harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.
9. I have considered whether this harm could be addressed by a planning condition to require that the works to each property were carried out simultaneously. However, it is not clear from the information before me that owners of Nos 8 and 10 have any control over other land within the site outside of their ownership. Accordingly, I cannot be sure that such a condition would be reasonable or enforceable, and I am not therefore satisfied that it would

meet the tests for conditions outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). In the absence of any other mechanism to properly secure simultaneous mansard extensions to both properties, I cannot be sure that each extension would be completed. On that basis, I am unable to find that the proposal would not detract from the character and the appearance of the host buildings and area with consequent detriment to the significance of the CA.

10. The appellants have drawn my attention to draft changes to the Framework giving support to mansard roof extensions and advising that a condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple mansard extensions unless there is an exceptional justification. However, this is not part of the Framework currently, and I cannot be sure that it will form part of any future iteration. It consequently carries limited weight in my decision, and having regard to the circumstances of the appeal site and the evidence before me, I consider that it would be necessary in this case to secure simultaneous development to ensure that there would not be harm to the CA.
11. I note examples of roof extensions to other buildings in the CA referred to by the appellants, including those at Nos 23 and 25 which were apparently approved under separate applications and which are of slightly different design to one another, but it is not clear that these were considered in light of the same policies and guidance as would be relevant here. Moreover, Nos 23 and 25 are part of a clear group of 3 matching buildings together with 27 Short Road. There is no similar roof extension to No 27, resulting in a pronounced imbalance to this group which is evident from the street and which I consider should not be replicated.
12. The proposal also includes alterations to the existing two-storey rear projection to No 10, altering the roof from a pitched to a flat form. I saw flat sections to the main roofs of other buildings nearby, but from my observations at my visit, a flat roof at two-storey height would be unusual. Furthermore, while I appreciate that the rear of the buildings here are not uniform, the pitched roof forms to the projections of Nos 8 and 10 (and to No 6 adjacent) provide for a degree of visual similarity notwithstanding their different proportions. This would be eroded by the proposed flat roof.
13. The appellants advise that the alteration to the outrigger roof did not form part of the Council's reason for refusal of a previous application at No 10. However, it was a reason for refusal of the appeal application, and I must come to my own view on the basis of the evidence before me. I acknowledge that there would be very limited opportunities for views of this part of the development such that its visual impact would be slight. Nevertheless, I consider that the alteration to the outrigger roof at No 10 in combination with the potential for a mansard extension to come forward to only one of Nos 8 and 10 would further erode the symmetry of the host dwelling pair to the detriment of their character and appearance.
14. For these reasons and irrespective of the proposed materials, I am unable to determine that the character, appearance and significance of the CA would be preserved. Given the scale of the development and the localised nature of the effect, I find that the harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial in the terms of the Framework. The Framework therefore indicates that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In

doing so, the Framework states that heritage assets are irreplaceable and great weight should be given to their conservation.

15. The proposal would provide additional and enhanced living space for occupiers of the site. However, these benefits would be mostly private, and would be limited by the small scale of the development. The appellants comment that the development would replace concrete tiles which are not in keeping, but there are few available views of these tiles currently so that the visual impact would be minor, limiting the benefit. In my judgement, the public benefits of the proposal are insufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the CA as a heritage asset, a matter that attracts considerable importance and weight.
16. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. For the reasons above, I can only conclude that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and the appearance of the Chiswick House CA. There would accordingly be conflict with Policies SC7, CC1, CC2 and CC4 of the Local Plan 2015 which together broadly seek high quality design and development that complements local character and that conserves or enhances heritage assets.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR