



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2023

by H Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/23/3321514

29a and 29b Barnes High Street, London SW13 9LW

- 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 Guy Chambers against the decision of Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0491/FUL, dated 24 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is Joint application for the partial infill of the central valley of the main roof of 29a & 29b and installation of 4 conservation roof lights to the rear roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Barnes Green Conservation Area with particular regard to the effect on the significance of a Building of Townscape Merit.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within the Barnes Green Conservation Area (CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. The CA is characterised by four distinct areas, including Barnes High Street, with the Green as a focus for the area. Its significance is derived from the varied townscape with a mix of ages and uses.
4. 29 Barnes High Street is an 18th Century building and has been designated locally as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM) and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. It is a two storey, double fronted building in use as two dwellings, with a distinctive double pitched roof and has recently been the subject of a sensitive restoration. Its significance is derived from the age of the building as one of the earliest surviving buildings on Barnes High Street and the prominent rendered gable of the building featuring the double pitched roof. This is visible from both short and longer range views along Barnes High Street.
5. Although the roof form was originally hidden from view by the now removed adjacent building and buildings around the host property have changed in recent years changing the view of it from the river, the prominent valley roof remains a distinctive and prominent feature of the street scene.

6. The current appeal proposal is somewhat different to the previous scheme that was dismissed in March 2022 (APP/L5810/W/21/3276087), most notably the removal of the dormer window, the set back of the infill element, the reduction in height, the change to the pitch and the use of half round clay ridge tiles. I acknowledge that these changes to the scheme would reduce the impact of the proposal on the street scene, however the view of the valley roof would be altered with the roof tiles giving the appearance of a pitched roof.
7. It is this view with the distinctive valley roof which is of particular importance to the streetscene and the significance of the building within it. The visuals and renders accompanying the application illustrate the impact of the proposed partial infill of the valley. Whilst I accept that from some viewpoints there would be limited alterations to the roof form, overall the proposal would be prominent in the street scene, especially when viewed along Barnes High Street from the River Thames.
8. For the above reasons, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA with particular regard to the effect on the significance of the BTM. Consequently, the development would not meet the statutory tests set out in the Act and would conflict with Policies LP1, LP3 and LP4 of the Local Plan 2018 and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Amongst other matters, these seek to ensure that development preserves and where possible enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and respects the character of the area.
9. Given that the proposal relates to only one part of the CA, the harm arising from the proposal, in terms of the approach in the Framework, would be less than substantial. In these circumstances the Framework advises at paragraph 202 that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
10. Whilst I accept that the proposal would provide additional living accommodation, I am unconvinced that this equates to a public benefit, including the need to secure the optimum viability of the building, sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified, given that this harm carries great weight. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with the aims of the Framework in terms of conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Conclusion

11. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, that outweigh this conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

H Senior

INSPECTOR