



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2023

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/23/3325702

29 Grove Park Gardens, Chiswick, Hounslow, London, W4 3RY

- 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 M&P Developments (London) Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00525/29/P8, dated 21 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is retrospective replacement windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. At the time of my visit, I saw that the replacement windows had been fitted and the development was complete. I also note that the application has been submitted retrospectively. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development enhances or preserves the character or appearance of the Grove Park Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a large Victorian semi-detached house. Mature trees along the street, and within some front gardens, give the area a verdant character. The appeal property matches the design of several other semi-detached houses on both sides of the road. Common features that contribute to their character and appearance, some of which are referred to in the Grove Park Conservation Area Appraisal (2021) (CAA) include: projecting gable and bay windows to the first and ground floors which dominate the front elevation; pitched roofed dormers; recessed front doors; and stained glass windows on the upper half of the bay windows, above the porch, and above and to the side of front doors. The CAA in particular notes that windows and doors are key features and encourages their retention and reinstatement. It also identifies the appeal property as a positive contributor to the area.
5. The Council's Residential Extension Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (2017) (SPD) states that replacement windows which differ in materials, design and finish from the original will normally be refused. The original windows had wooden frames and comprised stained glass above and

around the front door and on the upper bay windows, with leaded windows below. They undoubtedly made a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the host property, despite some being poorly repaired, and their replacement by UPVC windows has harmed the character and appearance of the building.

6. I have a duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Given the small scale of the development within the context of the CA as a whole, the harm to its character and appearance would be localised, limited and less than substantial. However, I must nonetheless give the harm found considerable importance and weight in the context of a duty to favour preservation or enhancement. The proposal would consequently be contrary to policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2030 (2015) and the SPD which require high quality design that does not harm the character and appearance of buildings and enhances the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
7. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires justification and, in accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), I must weigh the harm against the public benefits of the proposal. There would be modest benefits arising from the improved thermal performance of the building. However, as the SPD notes, wooden framed double glazing and secondary glazing can improve thermal performance without harming the appearance of a building. I do not therefore consider that the benefits outweigh the harm to the appearance of the building and the Grove Park Conservation Area.

Other matters

8. The appellant has suggested that previous consents at the appeal property implied that replacement UPVC windows were acceptable. I do not have the details of previous applications and must deal with the proposal before me, which for the reasons given above I have found to be unacceptable. Also, whilst it appears that the Council may have approved the replacement of original features elsewhere within the CA, that does not justify the further erosion of features of importance to its character and appearance. In any case, I have come to my own view regarding the development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR