

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2024

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/23/3330337

42 Sandycoombe Road, Twickenham TW1 2LR

- 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 Simon Clements against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application, Ref. DC/JMO/23/1390/HOT, dated 18 May 2023 was refused by notice dated 10 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of the existing roof into habitable space by raising the roof to form a ridge; changing the pitch of the front and roof slope; raising the parapet walls and chimneys; erecting a pitched roof dormer at the rear and installing three roof lights at the front and one at the rear roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed alterations and additions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling; the Sandycoombe Road street scene, and the Cambridge Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling, No. 42 Sandycoombe Road, is a late 19th century two-storey detached house (plus basement) located in a residential side road within the conservation area. In its position on the north east side of the road the house is somewhat set apart from its nearest neighbours, No. 79 St Margaret's Road to the north and Sandycoombe Lodge to the south. The latter is a Grade II* listed building and, as such, shares with the Conservation Area the status of 'a designated heritage asset'.
 4. This gap between No. 42 and the nearest buildings on this side of the road means that the appeal property 'stands-alone' in the street scene. And whilst this can have the advantage of any alterations and additions not being closely read with immediately adjoining neighbours, the drawback is that the appeal dwelling is particularly prominent in views in both directions along Sandycoombe Road.
 5. No. 42 does not appear to have had any extensions or external alterations since it was built, certainly not in views from the road. As such, it is an excellent example of the architecture of its period and is distinctive not just because of
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the difference in appearance with the other houses on both sides of the road but also particularly due to its noticeable height to width ratio.

6. In its current original form this is not displeasing because the combination of the building's prominence and height gives emphasis to the noteworthy relationship between the crown roof, the parapet walls and the chimneys. As a result, the appearance this part of the building makes a significant and positive contribution to its overall character. The height of the building relative to the surrounding buildings is thereby acceptable and is not perceived as being overly dominant because it clearly derives from its legitimacy as an unspoilt example of a late C19th Victorian villa.
7. However, whilst the appeal scheme is ostensibly a reasonable architectural solution to provide the required additional accommodation, the alterations would in my view inevitably draw the eye as a somewhat contrived and jarring feature that would detract from the visual merit of the building itself, the street scene and the setting of the listed Sandycombe Lodge. The additional bulk of the roof would be overly dominant and inevitably upset the existing balance between this part of the building and the first floor and ground floor feature windows.
8. I have had regard to the arguments made in the appellant's grounds of appeal, but they do not alter my view that the appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling; the Sandycombe Road street scene, and the Cambridge Park Conservation Area. This would harmfully conflict with Policies LP1, LP2 & LP3 of the Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan 2018; the Council's House Extensions and External Alterations SPD 2015; the St Margaret's Village Planning Guidance 2016, and with Government policy in Section 16: 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' of the National Policy Framework 2023 ('the Framework').
9. As required by the Framework's paragraph 208, because the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area and Sandycombe House as designated heritage assets, I have weighed this harm against any public benefits. However, whilst there would be a minor economic benefit to the local economy as a result of the building work, this would be insufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified in this Decision.
10. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR