



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2024

by Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/23/3334141
287-291 Bath Road, Hounslow TW3 3DB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs S.K Toor against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref P/2023/1113 dated 3 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is Change of use of No. 287 Bath Road from a residential (C3) to bed and breakfast (C1) and erection of a part single, part two storey rear extension to all three properties (287-291).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site is located within the St Paul's Conservation Area (CA). Therefore, as the proposal relates to a designated heritage asset, I have had special regard to section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.
3. The address within the application form details the site address as 287 Bath Road. The site more accurately encompasses 287-291 Bath Road and I have therefore carried this through within my banner heading as per the submitted appeal form.
4. There is no substantive evidence before me provided from the appellant to confirm Numbers 289 and 291 benefits from a lawful development certificate for a change of use from residential C3 use to a C1 use class, hotel/bed and breakfast. As part of this appeal, it is not within my jurisdiction to determine whether or not these buildings are within a C1 use.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - Whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St. Paul's CA; and
 - Whether the change of use to a bed and breakfast would have an unacceptable effect with regards to loss of family accommodation.

Reasons

Character and appearance of conservation area

6. The significance of St. Paul's CA derives from its quality townscape comprising of an early Victorian development and well designed and laid out inter-war housing of two storey terraces and semi-detached housing, giving rise to a classic English suburb built around the impressive landmark St. Paul's Church. This Grade II listed building is the centrepiece of the CA and together with the urban form and open space, adds positively to the character of the CA.
7. The appeal site comprises 287 to 291 Bath Road. These large villas and terrace on the other side of St. Paul's Church flank the religious venue. The villas are distinctive for their similarity in style with their raised quoins to the corners and windows, which have been painted black. This is specifically referenced within the CA appraisal (CAA). Although at the time of my visit, the appeal villas had been entirely rendered and the black coloured quoins no longer visible, and I am aware that they have had some additional changes to their entrances, nevertheless, the villas retain a sense of continuity with the others that share the same characteristics.
8. Even though the CAA does not specifically comment on the rear elevations of these villas, nevertheless the rear facade carries significance within the CA as a whole, with private views from residential dwellings also to consider. There are already large extensions to these villas but these to my mind have a more appropriate scale and proportion when compared to the size of the historic villas and the traditional U shape characteristic to their plan form can still be read.
9. As a combination of the extensions proposed to all three villas would, cumulatively add substantially more scale and bulk to them. It would detrimentally erode the original proportions of the villa. Therefore, the U shape plan-form that contributes to the integrity of the villas, at this scale, would be adversely compromised. Even though the villas are sizable buildings set in spacious plots, nevertheless, these extensions to the outriggers would not appear subservient to the host building and would consequently unacceptably distort the authentic plan-form that the CAA intentionally seeks to resist extensions that lose integrity of layout.
10. In addition, the villas were originally built as pairs of semi-detached houses. The front still displays a distinction between pairs. However, the rear elevation as a combination of extensions would join them together and reduce their distinctiveness as separate pairs. This proposed scheme would further compound this by creating continuity that I find to have an adversely dominating effect whereby weakening the identity of the pairs of villas.
11. I appreciate Number 291 has already been extended two storey to the rear and I could see from my inspection on site that other adjacent villas have been extended to the rear. However, I am not provided with any substantive details of this to allow me to comment further.
12. The buildings are specifically identified with the CAA and described within it as being a positive contributor to the CA. Furthermore, development within the CA should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. To this end, I find the character and appearance of the CA would not be preserved or

enhanced and as such be contrary to Section 72(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

13. Paragraph 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that any harm to the significance of the heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Also, with reference to the Framework and proposals affecting heritage assets, in finding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the impact of the proposal, I find that the harm to be 'less than substantial' in this instance. This harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the Framework.
14. To that end, there would be economic benefits arising from a C1 use, as well as arising from the construction process along with local spend. However, these would be small overall gains. Cycle parking would be secured as part of the proposal, but this would be a very small environmental gain. Bringing these matters together, there are no public benefits of the scheme before me to amount to a clear and convincing justification to outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage asset I have identified.
15. To conclude on this main issue, the proposal would not safeguard the historic environment, conflicting with the design aims and protecting the historic environment objectives of Local Plan Policies CC1, CC2 and CC4 and the same objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Effect of loss of residential unit

16. The Council's specific planning policies seek to maximise housing growth in the borough and to secure this type of proposed use within town centres or edge-of-centre locations, before directing this type of use to other locations, and seeking a sequential test to demonstrate there are no alternative sites.
17. A sequential test has been submitted by the appellant identifying a number of sites that are currently being marketed for sale focusing their search within premises including, broadly speaking; town centre commercial units; industrial units; offices and other residential units specifically targeted within the Hounslow Town Centre and Hounslow West Neighbourhood Centre, and the edge of these centres. The appellant's findings discount all of these alternatives in favour of the location before me at appeal for various reasons including size of unit, loss of protected retail space, marketing opportunities. In addition, they discount residential uses on the basis of effect on living conditions of local residents, and issues with storage of waste provision.
18. However, as the site before me is also within close quarters to other residential uses, and there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that waste provision cannot be suitably contained, I am not persuaded this is a sufficiently robust reason to discount sites. Neither am I swayed to agree that another available residential dwelling in relation to transport and public amenities is a firm barrier to discount it in favour of the appeal site. Overall, the evidence before me is not sufficient to convince me there are no other sequentially preferable sites than the one at appeal. To that end, there is no substantive evidence before me to come to the view that this C3 residential dwelling should not be protected as family accommodation.

19. To conclude on this main issue, the proposal would therefore not safeguard this C3 residential use, contrary to the objectives of the Local Plan Policies SC1, SC10 and ED3 and the same objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

20. Bringing both main issues together, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations which lead me to determine the appeal otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR

